

The Journals of

A N D R É G I D E



ANDRÉ GIDE

Philippe Halsman

The Journals of

A N D R É G I D E

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH AND

ANNOTATED BY

Justin O'Brien

VOLUME III: 1928-1939

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VOLUME III: 1928–1939

Cuverville, 2 January

I had hoped to finish out this notebook with the year. Two days behind. The cold dismays and knots me up. Have been out only twice in the last week: visit to the unfortunate Déhais, who is never free of the most frightful pain; then, the next day, a more distant call on the Malendins to see again the three little orphans who had spoken to me so nicely on the road as I was coming back from the Déhaises' and to whom I wanted to take something to help them celebrate New Year's Day a bit more gaily. Immensity of human poverty. In contrast to which the indifference of certain rich people or their egotism is becoming more and more incomprehensible to me. Concern with oneself, one's comfort, one's ease, one's salvation, denotes an absence of charity that is ever becoming more disgusting to me.

Each one of these young writers analyzing his suffering from the "*mal du siècle*,"¹ or from mystic aspirations, or from unrest, or from boredom, would be cured at once if he strove to cure or to relieve the *real* sufferings of those around him. We who have been favored have no right to complain. If, with all we have, we still don't know how to be happy, this is because we have a false idea of happiness. When we understand that the secret of happiness lies not in possessing but in giving, by making others happy we shall be happier ourselves. — Why and how have not those who call themselves Christians better understood this initial truth of the Gospel?

Wrote a reply to François Porché's book;² in which I do not say the tenth of what I have to say. It is an arrow that I fear to overweight; it is good to imply that one has others in one's quiver. Moreover, it is not *at* Porché that I am aiming, and I hope this will be understood.

Read with unequal, but often very great, admiration a number of poems by Hölderlin.

Little or no piano-playing; instrument out of tune and fourth and fifth fingers of my right hand half-paralyzed by rheumatism. No matter;

¹ The term, meaning "world-weariness" and corresponding closely to the German *Weltschmerz*, was coined by Musset during the romantic period and revived in 1924 by the young essayist Marcel Arland as typical of the postwar unrest.

² *L'Amour qui n'ose pas dire son nom* (*The Love That Dares Not Reveal Itself*), a study of homosexuality.

I am beginning the year in full possession of myself and with smiling resignation to the inevitable.



Cuverville, 3 January

Despite every resolution of optimism, melancholy occasionally wins out: man has decidedly botched up the planet.

At Beuzeville. I am waiting on the platform with other third-class passengers. An employee is holding back the crowd: "Don't get in; the train is going to move up."

A well-dressed gentleman disregards him in order to get into the car ahead of the others:

"Never mind, never mind," he says to the employee trying to hold him back; "I have the habit."

"The habit of what?" asks the employee, somewhat abashed by the other's assurance and cheek. As he gets in, the other shouts:

"The habit of sitting down."

And he reappears a moment later at the window, smiling and looking very pleased with himself. He has found a corner seat. He is one of those who know their way around.

Paris, 5 January

Stopped at the Hotel Littré while awaiting M.'s return; in the morning I go to the Villa to get some necessary things. On the way back, to the Société Générale to have some money sent to B.; then *N.R.F.*; then *Mercure*.³ Enjoyed talking with Vallette because of his great common sense and agreeable good nature, and, I believe, a certain good-heartedness. After lunch, fruitless call on Jean Schlumberger, who will not be back until tonight. Then Ile Saint-Louis to see L., whom I have asked to type out the manuscript of the "shepherd poet."⁴ Then to Charlie's.⁵ Comfortable conversation (for me at least, since the poor nightingale is suffering from laryngitis and can utter only muffled sounds). Back to the hotel for a restful bath. Before dinner I had the idea of calling on Adrienne Monnier, who has just sent me at Cuverville a beautiful engraving by her sister; I suddenly realize that it is

³ The Villa is the house André Gide had built in Auteuil. The Société Générale is a large French bank. The *N.R.F.* or *Nouvelle Revue Française* is the monthly literary review André Gide and his friends had founded in 1909, to which had now been added a publishing house; and the *Mercure de France* is the literary review, by now fortnightly, founded in 1890 by Vallette, Remy de Gourmont, and others.

⁴ This might be a reference to Francis Jammes.

⁵ The critic Charles Du Bos.

her day for receiving. I planned to arrive at seven and spend only a few minutes; I tarry an hour; and only when I have left does it occur to me that probably the few close friends who were present were merely waiting for me to leave so that they could go out to dinner together. Talked much too much, as I am inclined to do after a period of solitude, losing self-control; for I was aware that I was talking too much, but could not check myself. Told, rather badly, several of Mardrus's anecdotes, without the zest they needed to set them off to advantage, and moreover, yielding to that absurd need of repeating the word or phrase which, in my opinion, had not caused enough laughter, though knowing perfectly well that what has seemed only slightly funny does not seem funny at all when repeated. And what need to add personal details that no one wants to know? The need of showing myself to be confident and perfectly at ease, precisely when I am least so. Oh, how miserable all this is! . . .

Less anxious to shine oneself than to get the maximum out of others.

Trip to Berlin from 17 January to 3 February 1928.

Heard in the street:

"Il n'a pas pu s'empêcher que de rigoler."

"Ca n'sera jamais plus pire qu'ici."

"Il en a fait profiter à tout le monde." ⁶

When faced with certain rich people, how can one fail to feel communistically inclined?

"You can't give more for a pension than for wages." This is the reasoning used to reduce the pension that the owners of the Villa Montmorency, at the meeting I attend (12 February '28), plan to pay to the concierge who is being laid off after forty years of faithful service. "She used to get a hundred and fifty francs a month (or a hundred and seventy-five)." A hundred and fifty francs were suggested as a pension. The question was so badly stated that it seemed as if voting against this figure amounted to voting against any pension at all.

In a general hubbub, I pointed out that she used to get, in addition, her lodging and electricity and a number of partial aids and little tips, which would no longer be coming her way. There were several of us who considered the suggested pension insufficient. I believe that with a little skill we could have got it raised to two hundred francs. This is what I was aiming for. But the man next to me, awkwardly and as if

⁶ Each of these sentences contains a popular pleonasm: "He could not help *but* laugh"; "It will never be *more* worse than here"; and "He allowed to everyone to take advantage of it."

ironically, shouted out to ask for two hundred and fifty, and this aroused such protests that the figure of a hundred and fifty was maintained. One gets nothing when aiming to get too much. Decidedly I am no good in a meeting: I lose all my calm; my heart beats; I am seized with trembling and I could more easily produce cries and sobs than a speech, or simply a few sensible words. In order to speak well, I need to feel that I am being listened to.

13 February

Preface to *Lucien Leuwen* by Valéry — in the very beautiful Schiffrin edition that I received yesterday evening.⁷ I recognize in it, for the first time in Valéry, a certain desire to conciliate, a certain fear of displeasing. Would Valéry dare write today his wonderful pages on Pascal that appeared in the *Revue hebdomadaire*?⁸

Later on, through a desire to clarify the question (for despite everything these pages struck me as very beautiful), I read a few pages of *L'Esprit des lois* . . . marvellous.⁹ How does it happen that no one has ever compared Valéry (I am speaking of Valéry as a prose writer) to Montesquieu?

I plunge with rapture into Hölderlin's *Hyperion*,¹⁰ happy to understand it so well.

But these calm hours, which for one were paradise, tired the patience of the other who tolerated them only when provisional. He used them as a springboard, stretching himself taut, with but one anxiety, but one restraint: to hide from his companion that he was getting ready to leap.

24 February¹¹

It happens that in various associations, whether conjugal or friendly, involving life in common, the common sense of the couple or team is, as it were, joint, and that the excess of one of the pair involves, as a sort of counterpoise, a contrary excess on the part of the other. Thus the wife's excessive piety can hurl the husband into atheism; one becomes more negligent the more finicky becomes the other, who in the

⁷ *Lucien Leuwen* is one of Stendhal's less famous novels. Valéry's preface can be found in his *Variété II* (1929).

⁸ This essay was republished in Valéry's *Variété* (1924).

⁹ *The Spirit of Laws* by Montesquieu is one of the great works of the Enlightenment.

¹⁰ *Hyperion* (1797-9) is a novel concerning the Greek uprising against the Turks in 1770.

¹¹ Dictated. [Note supplied by the author in the French edition. Such notes will hereafter be indicated by an A. in brackets.]

beginning simply had a sense of order; one becomes more avaricious the more prodigal the other. If one locks up everything, this is because the other leaves everything lying about. Likewise, in the jaws of rodents, we see a tooth of the lower maxilla lengthen if the one opposite it in the upper maxilla is missing.

Monday, 27 February ¹²

Yesterday, *Nosferatu, the Vampire*.¹³

A rather nondescript German film, but of a nondescript quality that forces one to reflect and to imagine something better. Terror, just like pity, can be excited in the mind of the spectator (at least of *this* spectator) only if he is not too much aware of the author's concern to move to terror or pity; furthermore, I doubt whether the classic precept:

If you wish me to weep, you yourself must grieve first ¹⁴
is a very good recipe.

In *Nosferatu* the hero's terror checks, gets in the way of mine. The hero, who is depicted as dashing, venturesome, and even very pleasingly bold, undergoes a dreadful change and passes from excessive joy to the expression of an excessive terror. I should myself be more frightened if I were less aware of his being afraid.

If I were to make over the film, I should depict *Nosferatu* — whom we know to be *the vampire* from the start — not as terrible and fantastic, but on the contrary in the guise of an inoffensive young man, charming and most obliging. I should like it to be only on the basis of very mild indications, in the beginning, that any anxiety should be aroused, and in the spectator's mind before being aroused in the hero's. Likewise, wouldn't it be much more frightening if he were first presented to the woman in such a charming aspect? It is a kiss that is to be transformed into a bite. If he shows his teeth at the outset, it becomes nothing but a childish nightmare.

How much cleverer it would be, instead of constantly emphasizing that concern with terror, to pretend on the contrary a desire to reassure the spectator: "No, not at all, there is nothing terrible there at all, nothing that is not quite natural; at most something a bit *too* charming"; even though one might have to let *Nosferatu* be more open about it on the boat with the sailors.

Likewise for the pseudo-scientific part, presented here with a truly German heavy hand; absurd. How much cleverer it would have been,

¹² Dictated. [A.]

¹³ A German film adapted from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, directed by F. W. Murnau and featuring Max Schreck, produced by Prana-Film in 1922.

¹⁴ Horace: *Epistolæ*, II, iii. 102-3.

PREFACE

What is the philosophy basic to the Soviet regime? This book tries to give an answer to that question. In order to write it, I learned Russian, and spent almost two years in the Soviet Union with no other function or purpose than to make observations, gather materials, study documents unobtainable here, talk with leading thinkers and ordinary people, and, in short, do and obtain whatever might throw light on Soviet philosophy in theory and practice.

So far as I know, no other scholar has ever gone to the U.S.S.R. with this kind of mission in the field of philosophy, in spite of the vast importance of the subject, both in the practical terms of international relations, and the scholarly terms of exploration at the foundations of a new culture.

Since this appears to be the first book attempting to cover the subject, it is appropriate that it should be an exposition of Soviet philosophy, not a polemic against it. If there ever was a subject on which we have had too much heat and too little light, it is this one. What do the Soviet Russians really believe? So far everyone has been so anxious to agree or disagree with them that no one seems to have taken the trouble to sum up their beliefs as a whole.

Some people will probably read this book, not to find out how much accurate or useful information there may be in it, but how much "sympathy" for the Soviet Union. They will undoubtedly find what they are looking for. I have tried to make the book true to the content and meaning of a living philosophy as it is found among those who live by it. If that sort of thing is not done with a certain amount of "sympathy," it cannot be

time have seemed painful to the ear and to be avoided. Later on, people took pleasure in it, as in the augmented fourth, each of these intervals permitting the passage from one key to another, the modulation, which soon became a delight to the ear.

Today these oversimple, too familiar relationships have no charm for our blunted senses. The ear accepts augmented and diminished intervals which pained it in the beginning. Neither the major seventh nor the minor second is outlawed. And that the ear should enjoy these dissonances, just as, in another domain, the eye should enjoy more subtle pictorial disharmonies, goes without saying.

I cannot think that our senses have acquired a greater acuteness; but perhaps they are more capable of enjoying any relationship of numbers whatever.

No longer aiming toward consonance and harmony, toward what is music heading? Toward a sort of barbarism. Sound itself, so gradually and exquisitely liberated from noise, is returning to it. At first only the lords, the nobles, are allowed to appear on the stage; then the bourgeoisie; then the masses. Once the stage is overrun, nothing distinguishes it from the street. But what can be done about it? What madness it is to strive to oppose that fatal progress! In modern music the consonant intervals of the past seem to us like the "ci-devant" aristocrats during the French Revolution.

29 February

Very much worn down, these last few days, by an absurd grippe that my petty daily occupations have not given me time to treat as I should have, by two days in bed. Cannot get myself to give up smoking. I had got out of the habit for two months, helped by Marc's example. Then both of us in Berlin allowed ourselves to be led into it again.

Despite this stultifying cold, I am not much aware of getting older, and have even rarely felt my mind more fit, my whole being more full of aspirations and desires. But I am constantly computing my age and telling myself that the ground may suddenly give way under my feet. I manage to get myself not to feel too melancholy over this.

Saint-Clair, 3 March

Sudden departure for the Midi. I convinced myself that I needed a change of air to cure my grippe. Central heating makes Élisabeth's new house very comfortable; but today, the day after my arrival, I stay in bed all day. Driving rain outside. Tremendous appetite for rest. Yet brain very active, at once receptive and creative. Ah, to be able to begin a new career; start out anew and under another name! How little

satisfies those who are succeeding today! Launching a tone of voice, a gait, a bearing, is enough for them. No maturation of thought; no composition. (If ever, later on, someone reads these lines, he will wonder whom I am getting at. . . . I am none too sure of it myself.)

Today read, in bed, several *Contes*¹⁶ by X. — with just enough pleasure to be able to praise him for them without hypocrisy. Some rather good reflections, but belonging to the temperate zone; in the manner of Boylesve.

What precaution! what prudence! And I do not know whether that "*odor di femina*" which he takes care to spread throughout his book will reassure his contemporaries as to him more than it worries me retrospectively about many others — who, in their time, had even more reason to protect themselves than X. can have today.

Finished the first part of *Hyperion*.

9 March

X. splits hairs in order to know more about their nature. Y., to show off his subtlety.

How often have I directed my attention, my study, to this or that fugue of Bach, for instance, precisely because in the beginning it discouraged me; through a need of doing myself violence and guided by that obscure feeling that what thwarts us and demands of us the greatest effort is also what can teach us most.

Read with the greatest interest *Une Fille d'Ève* and *Une Double Famille*, which I did not yet know and which seem to me, if not among the best, at least among the most revelatory.¹⁷ Completely gripped by Balzac again.

10 March

There is no longer time. I ought, especially if I set out for Borneo in November, to think only of finishing up the books I still want to write. In this sort of convalescence I came to indulge in here, I am yielding to the enchantment of learning: every day, an hour or two of German. I have read one after the other *La Paix du ménage*, *La Fausse Maîtresse*, and reread *Un Prince de la Bohême*.¹⁸ I need the above argument, which I constantly repeat to myself, to tear myself away from the spell and not read those I do not yet know, or reread those I don't

¹⁶ *Tales*.

¹⁷ *A Daughter of Eve* and *A Double Family* are both novels by Balzac.

¹⁸ *Domestic Peace*, *The Imaginary Mistress*, and *A Prince of Bohemia* are all short novels by Balzac.

remember very well. Perhaps a resource for later on — (but my eyes are getting tired).

It is interesting to seek the reason why Joseph Conrad could not endure Dostoyevsky, why Martin du Gard cannot endure Balzac.

This morning I am expecting a call from Pierre-Quint, who is coming to let me see his study.¹⁹ Yesterday Lalou showed me the long preface by him that appears at the head of the reprinting of my *Dostoyevsky*. . . . How does it happen that they all have such trouble seizing me and painting a lifelike portrait of me?

I recall Degas's remark that he liked only *poseurs*, for: "How do you expect me to give a man a figure if he doesn't know how to give himself one?" — Almost all the artists I see (I really ought to say: whom I don't see) assume a set attitude, which often does duty for talent. I have never sought anything but what was natural.

No, there is absolutely no need of being mean to hurt someone else. And this is the most tragic thing about it: that good people who love each other can pain and grieve each other with the best will in the world.

17 March ²⁰

Last night at the Ursulines: *Tragedy in the Street*.²¹

Bruno Rahn's film is most remarkable.

A certain embarrassment, however, which I analyze later on, and which certainly comes from the fact that psychologically the young man's character is almost impossible. I do not know William Braun's novel, but am willing to bet that, in the novel, the young hero is five years younger than he seems on the screen. In the film we have a young man of twenty-two, and this completely falsifies the character. He becomes an unstable "gay dog" with a blasé character. He comes home to his parents' house drunk and we first see his key fumbling for the lock. His mother is brokenhearted to see him in such a state — the text on the screen implies that this is not the first time — his father drives him out. He prowls the streets for three days, goes to sleep on a doorstep half-dead with hunger, is taken in by a prostitute, and soon wallows in the most sordid debauchery. . . . Obviously, this is all possi-

¹⁹ Though it was not to appear until 1932, a great part of Léon Pierre-Quint's book *André Gide, sa vie, son œuvre*, was already in manuscript in 1928. A brief article by him was included in the volume of homage entitled *André Gide* and published in 1928 by Éditions du Capitole.

²⁰ Dictated. [A.]

²¹ A German film entitled in the original *Dirnentragödie*, directed by Bruno Rahn for Pantomim Film Co. in 1927 and starring Asta Nielsen.

ble; everything is possible, in psychology; but this is certainly not what William Braun meant, and, if some banal news-item was the starting-point for his book, I bet that the individual in question was perhaps only fifteen, surely not more than seventeen. This is how I imagine him: An utterly new person, and in no wise perverted. He leaves his parents' house for quite different reasons; I do not know what ones. I can readily imagine him as like the Jacques of *Les Thibault* or Daniel de Fontanin.²² I see him taken in, like the latter, by a prostitute who feels toward him an emotion of almost maternal pity. From that moment on, everything changes character; both his relationship with that woman and the attitude of the pimp in regard to him, for the latter cannot see a rival in him. He is a mere child, and the pimp amuses himself by initiating him in sexual pleasure; the other woman is there to take a hand in this. The little fellow will yield through curiosity, not through listlessness. It is important that there should still be a great innocence in him — which the first woman will awkwardly try to protect.

This is the way it *must have* been. I fancy that the author of the film hesitated for fear of a scandal and that the public, in fact, would hardly have been inclined to accept these facts. But how much the film would have gained in emotional interest, in truth to nature!

29 March

Seated in front of a Cointreau at the wine-shop opposite the Gare d'Auteuil. I planned to go home and practice the piano and work right after dinner, but T. V. is arriving this evening, at ten fifteen. It is raining; it is cold. I can imagine such an arrival in Paris as so lugubrious that I cannot keep from going and meeting her train. I am writing these lines to keep myself busy while waiting for the train. I am leaving tomorrow for Cuverville, where I hope to get ahead with *L'École des femmes*.²³ Worked rather well these last few days; after enormous efforts at Saint-Clair, where I had spent ten days, I had managed to get the book into movement again, after having been stalled for more than six months (I believe). The wine-shop's pen is too bad. . . . Impossible to go on. . . .

Cuverville, 30 March

T. V. would like love; I can only give her friendship. However great this may be, her expectation of a more affectionate state falsifies all my

²² In the first volume of *The World of the Thibaults* by Roger Martin du Gard, Jacques Thibault and Daniel de Fontanin at the age of fourteen run away from their respective homes; in Marseille Daniel is sheltered by a prostitute.

²³ His tale *The School for Wives* was first published in 1929.

acts and leads me to the edge of insincerity. I explain myself this evening in a letter, which will perhaps hurt her and which it is hard for me to write; but the fear of hurting is one of the forms of cowardice, and my whole being revolts against it.

Great appetite for meditation and reading. But I fear everything that distracts me from *L'École des femmes*. Walk back and forth at length and be willing to think of nothing rather than to think of anything but my book.

April N.R.F. Excellent remarks by Jean Cassou about Max Jacob. Excellent pages by Lhote on Courbet.

Abominable torpor, such as I have never known but here, I believe.

1 April

Marcel Drouin's arrival at Cuverville.

It is odd that with the same people we always fall into the same failings. How can I explain that irresistible need, when I am with Marcel, of quoting myself? I yield to it again almost every time, despite the irritation I know it causes him; and I never do it save with him.

17 April

Back from Le Tertre, where I could tarry only two days.²⁴ Very full and profitable conversations, as always with Roger. Reciprocal (I was about to say: mutual) readings of *L'École des femmes* and of two long chapters of *Les Thibault*, those that are to frame in the death of old Thibault, to wit: the dialogue of Oscar Thibault with the Abbé Vécard, and Abbé Vécard's dialogue with Antoine. Both of them seem excellent to me. What a joy to be able to tell him so with complete sincerity! But we are both rather vexed by the fact that in each of these dialogues the Abbé triumphs, after all; he has the best role and the final word. Though Roger puts himself into Antoine much more than I ever did into Édouard,²⁵ he does, despite himself and through a sort of professional honesty, let the Abbé get the advantage over him and dominate the discussion from a lofty position.

Roger is deeply concerned by the "idiotic" role I make him play in *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . and in *Le Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*;²⁶ I bring him in, he says, only to prove him wrong, and offer on his be-

²⁴ Le Tertre is the name of Roger Martin du Gard's home at Bellême.

²⁵ The novelist character of *The Counterfeiters*.

²⁶ *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . (*If It Die* . . .) is Gide's memoirs; whereas *The Counterfeiters' Daybook* is the journal of the writing of *The Counterfeiters*.

half only a few absurd objections, with the sole purpose of defending myself against him and showing that I am right to pay no attention to them, etc. It will be none the less clear that he was the only one I consulted and whose advice I sought: I noted down only those against which I balked, but this is because I followed the others — beginning with the advice to gather together the various plots of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, which, had it not been for him, would have formed so many separate “tales.”²⁷ And this is why I dedicated the volume to him. Likewise, why note down his few criticisms of *L'École des femmes* since I am paying attention to every one of them? — they will lead me to retouch a few spots and especially to make a few additions, which now, in fact, seem to me indispensable.

And reciprocally, according to my suggestions, he will fuse certain parts of the dialogue between Abbé Vécard and Antoine.

Bennett is amazed that we should thus seek each other's advice; yet nothing is more advantageous.

18 April

My writings are comparable to Achilles' spear, with which a second contact cured those it had first wounded. If one of my books disconcerts you, reread it; under the apparent poison, I took care to hide the antidote; each one of them does not so much disturb as it warns.

19 April

Finally a good night's sleep without sleeping-potion, something I had not known for a long time. And at once I feel full of zeal, vigor, and virtue.

After days and weeks of rain the sky is utterly pure this morning; this is perhaps enough to explain my state.

21 April

I have read Mauriac's *Racine*,²⁸ in which I note: “R. points out that they (*Les Lettres provinciales*²⁹) were never seen save in the hands of Huguenots; and this tells a good deal about the role that Port-Royal played in the Church, even in its best period.”

But mightn't it be said that the best of causes runs the risk of being discredited by those who make use of it and into whose hands it plays unintentionally? Did we not see the same thing in the Dreyfus affair;

²⁷ Until *The Counterfeiters*, Gide had been unwilling to call any of his fictions “novels,” intentionally limiting them by the designation “tales.”

²⁸ The full title is *Life of Jean Racine*, by François Mauriac.

²⁹ Pascal's *Provincial Letters* were written as polemic to defend the cause of the Jansenism of Port-Royal against the Jesuit attacks that eventually caused it to be declared heretical.

and did not the *Journal des Débats* entitle its absurd article of protest against my campaign about the Concessionary Companies: "The exploitation of an accusation"? ³⁰

Heard this morning while waiting my turn at the butcher's:

"And what about Julie? I never see her any more."

"She's always been *casernière*." ³¹

9 June

Lassitude and computation of death.

For a long time now, no further enjoyment in writing in this notebook. Aged considerably. Pottered away at chores rather than really worked.

After a trip to Belgium (lecture and showing of the film in Brussels) and to Holland (The Hague and Amsterdam) in order to prepare our trip to New Guinea, we give up the project.

When I think that I am barely beginning to shake off the Congo (I am still involved in correcting proofs for the big edition), I am somewhat terrified by the possible results of this new trip, even more than by the trip itself. Since our return Marc has done almost nothing; or at least has not really worked. I fear that, *for greater facility*, he may give up the best in him. ³²

I fear, if I take him to New Guinea, doing him a disservice and getting him definitely out of the habit of work. It is the pleasure, the happiness of being with him, that leads me there, even more than any curiosity for distant places. That felicity, to which I surrender, seriously falsifies my thought. It was for him, to win his attention, his esteem, that I wrote *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, just as I wrote all my preceding books under the influence of Em. or in the vain hope of convincing her. Urgent need of solitude and of recovering myself. It is no longer a matter of charming someone else — which can never be done without concessions and a certain self-deception. I must accept the fact that my path takes me away from those toward whom my heart inclines; and even recognize that it is my path from this: that it isolates me. If I were truly capable of prayer, I should cry out to God: Permit me to need only You. Seductions of the flesh are less distracting

³⁰ In both *Travels in the Congo* and a later article in *La Revue de Paris* Gide attacked the exploiting of the Africans by large French concessions.

³¹ Instead of the word *casanière* (homebody, stay-at-home), this speaker inadvertently uses an adjective formed from the word *caserne* (barracks).

³² In 1925 André Gide and Marc Allégret spent several months in the Congo on a mission for the Ministry of Colonies: Gide returned with two volumes of travel-diaries and Allégret with a film and many still photographs.

than those of the heart and mind. (And perhaps I am writing this because I know that for a long time now I have found it good not to resist the former. Useless to close my parenthesis. . . .

My novel ceases to interest me when I cease to work on it. Other things, at once, occupy my mind more, being in closer relationship with me. That fear I have of yielding to myself, that resolve to give others precedence, that need of losing sight of myself, has misled me. A certain superior egotism is doubtless necessary, and if I do not achieve it, I shall not outstrip myself.

To say, in *Les Nouvelles Nourritures*:³³

"Nathanaël, my friend, you are not sufficiently astonished that there is . . . something. And as soon as there is something, it can only be God."

The mind needs matter as a springboard; but matter achieves existence only when penetrated by the mind.

Took out Louÿs's correspondence to have it typed. Shocked by its stupidity, childishness, scurrility, and insignificance. How could I have put up with that friendship for so many years? It was because through all that and despite the rather vulgar covering, Louÿs revealed a sort of charming fervor and enthusiasm, and certain features of an excellent poet; it was because both of us were young; it was because he would come back to me immediately after having repulsed me, making of our relations a sort of vigorous quadrille in which I had to join willy-nilly. At the moment of *André Walter*,³⁴ already fed up, I had made a tremendous effort to get away from him without breaking off, and when, after months of solitude, I had seen him again, it was with the intention of protecting my opinions that he had previously maltreated, of maintaining my positions, of sheltering and protecting myself from him, of putting a little distance between him and me. Alas! that could not last; I was won over by his engaging manner. But those returns, those resumption of relations, wore me out. He would not agree to leave me alone; I felt for him only that affection without esteem which can produce nothing lasting, nothing good.

"You certainly took a long time to realize that Louÿs was second-rate!" Paul Laurens said to me much later. Without exactly admitting that to myself, I could not make up my mind to dedicate any of my books to him, while he was persistently dedicating all of his to me. —

³³ *New Fruits of the Earth*, which appeared in 1935.

³⁴ *Les Cahiers d'André Walter* (*André Walter's Notebooks*), Gide's first book, appeared in 1891. He and Pierre Louÿs had met in 1887 and their friendship lasted, with many ups and downs, until 1896.

Yes, second-rate, alas! but his books, some of them at least, were not, and bore traces of something indefinably exquisite, divine, that made me like him in spite of everything. Alas! very little trace of that indefinable something is found in his letters (I am speaking of those he addressed to me). Amidst this terrible hotchpotch, interesting at most because it shows his continual changes of mood, I barely find a few pages that seem to me to deserve being saved. (I am sure, moreover, that my letters to Pierre are just as disappointing.) Paulhan, to whom I offer them, having judged them too insignificant for the *N.R.F.*, I go and offer them to the *Mercure*, where Louÿs probably has more admirers.

12 June ³⁵

I greatly enjoyed dining the other evening with Julien Green. It had been promised for some time. With a really charming deference, and very rare in the new generation, he had made it clear that he insisted on my considering myself as his guest. I therefore had to let myself be taken by him to Prunier's, avenue Victor-Hugo, less ostentatious on the inside than the outside, which until now had frightened me off, had filled me with fear. In regard to luxury I remain insurmountably shy, though this had perhaps somewhat decreased, but now it seems to revive and become more intense with age. I remember the time when Vielé-Griffin and Jacques Blanche having asked me to meet them for lunch at the Terminus Saint-Lazare, I could not get myself, however unlikely this may seem, to go into the restaurant, but remained waiting for them in the lounge of the hotel, where they finally came to look for me after having waited for a very long time.

Green is probably extraordinarily like what I was at his age. More anxious, still, to understand and to agree than to assert his personality by resisting. I should have liked to be able to talk better with him. He was eager to show his confidence in me, and mine was very great toward him; but I have ever greater difficulty in opening up freely in a conversation. I fear to have disappointed him dreadfully, for I managed to say almost nothing but banal things to him; nothing of what he had a right to expect and hope for from me. Furthermore, I was extremely tired; anxious not to show it too much.

After having tarried at Prunier's, we reached the avenue des Champs-Élysées. The night was beautiful and both of us enjoyed walking. I offered to take him to the Lido, where neither one of us had ever been.³⁶ We had no need of being in ordinary clothes, among so many people dressed for the evening, to feel utterly out of place in this haunt of pleasure and luxury. Once seated at a table near the pool, we

³⁵ Dictated. [A.]

³⁶ The Lido is a well-known cabaret halfway down the avenue des Champs-Élysées.

wanted to wait for the show, which was not to begin until after midnight. Had it been one of my good days, nothing would have been more charming; but the conversation dragged on and on. Yet I heard with great interest what he told me of his next book. I like the fact that he does not know too well in advance where his characters are going to lead him, but I am not at all sure he did not say that just to please me, and remembering what I said of mine in my *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*. He has the good luck not to know insomnia, waking up every morning, he says, in exactly the position he took the night before to go to sleep. This doubtless assures him an evenness in his work, an almost excessive evenness in him: every day, at the same time and in the same number of hours he writes the same number of pages and of the same quality. His intellectual curiosity and his appetite for reading delight me. I should like him not to have too bad a recollection of that evening in which he showed himself to be so charming and in which I revealed myself as so ordinary; in which I deplore not having been able to talk to him better.

Marseille, 1 July

In Paris I at least can fall back on blaming others for making me waste my time. Here I can only hold it against myself. And I don't know when that pursuit is more degrading and more empty — when one encounters pleasure or when one seeks it without finding it? I am writing this now that I am getting old, and this evening when I feel tired. And tomorrow I shall begin again.

Hammamet, 6 July

Later on, that moderation, that forbearance, that tolerance we have shown toward Catholicism will be hard to forgive; our sympathy will seem weakness, and our indulgence will be judged without indulgence. Still fortunate if it is not said that we were afraid. And perhaps, after all, it would be justifiable to say so; but what frightens us is not the enemy, nor the forces he has at his disposition, so much as our own thought. I am afraid of my intransigence.

Tunis, 19 July

Does it occur to anyone to wonder: "What would Christ have done, what wouldn't he have done, if he had been allowed to live?" So deep is the habit of considering his suffering and death as forming part of his life and less as an end than as an accomplishment.

Paris, 22

Not only does M. not know what it is to love — but he does not even know that he doesn't know it. He knows affection and desire — not love.

Someone who can never take the "daily special"; or else he has to have the vegetable changed.

There is not one of my friends of whom, if I drew his portrait, I should not seem to be "saying ill." Love can be blind; friendship cannot; it owes it to itself not to be; and one can even go as far as to like a friend's shortcomings; but in order to help him know them. What have I to do with a friendship devoid of perspicacity? I intend to carry my hatred of indulgence to that extent.

Cuverville, 30 July

At times it seems to me, alas! that I have passed the best time for writing. I feel painfully in arrears with myself. And if you wish me to say: in arrears with God, I don't mind doing so, all the same. This simply means that I sometimes fear having waited too long, that I fear not only lacking time, but also fervor and that unsubdued exigence of thought that urges it to manifest itself. You resign yourself to silence, and nothing is more to be feared from old age than a sort of taciturn resignation. Even of those we most admire and know best, who can claim that we know the best and that they were permitted to say what mattered most to them? Just when one would like to speak, voice fails one and, when it returns, one expresses but memories of thoughts. Montaigne's strength comes from the fact that he always writes on the spur of the moment, and that his great lack of confidence in his memory, which he believes to be bad, dissuades him from putting off anything that comes to mind with a view to a more skillful and better-ordered presentation. I have always counted too much on the future and had recourse to too much rhetoric.

31 July

Read some Chateaubriand (*Mémoires* — excellent portrait of Mme de Coislin), some Rousseau (*Dialogues*), and, by Bossuet, some wonderful passages of the *Sermon sur le mauvais riche ou sur l'impénitence finale*.³⁷ — Went back to the piano abandoned for months. — *Grand Fugue* (and *Prelude*) for organ in B minor by Bach (Liszt) — fourth *Ballade* of Chopin, etc.

Toulon, 1 September

The month of August entirely spent in moving. Great fatigue. Painful desire to catch hold of myself and to work. My horizon is quite

³⁷ Chateaubriand's *Memoirs from beyond the Grave* form a vivid picture of the man and the epoch; Rousseau's three dialogues entitled *Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques* set forth his persecutions at the hands of his contemporaries; and Bossuet's *Sermon on the Evil Rich Man or on Final Impenitence* was preached before the court of Louis XIV in 1662.

blocked by that novel I have promised to America and must first finish,³⁸ then by that portrait of Montaigne for Malraux's *Histoire de la littérature*.³⁹ I am eager to have nothing ahead of me but . . . myself.

Three days at Pontigny, most interesting moreover, put the finishing touch to my fatigue.⁴⁰ Cuverville, where I should have liked to take refuge, is cluttered with people. I am therefore going to Saint-Clair. A derailment ahead of us makes us five hours late. Forced to spend the night in Toulon.

"If one didn't know Gide, one would really think he is having a good time," a young student at the second ten-day period at Pontigny says to Martin du Gard (who tells me this remark). This was during the evening games. Martin du Gard replies that his words reveal on the contrary that he doesn't know me at all.

Saint-Clair

Afternoon naps: like a voluptuous plunge into the abyss.

2 September

I shall not follow Montherlant in his great (and, indeed, very eloquent) offensive against women, against Woman (*Nouvelles littéraires*,⁴¹ special number devoted to Tolstoy). — I believe simply that the error consists in looking upon woman merely as an instrument of pleasure. Yet, faced with certain examples, I come to wonder if there is not still more danger in allowing more than the flesh to be involved, and if he who escapes love's trap most cheaply is not precisely the one who risks only the slightest and least valuable part of himself.

Saint-Clair, 14 September

I return to Paris this evening; stop at Toulon, then at Les Sources to see my Aunt Charles Gide surrounded by her family.

I have gone over the translation of the first act of *Hamlet*; at least made a few changes in the spots pointed out by Lalou. Carefully cor-

³⁸ The *Forum* had contracted to publish *The School for Wives* in Dorothy Bussy's translation.

³⁹ The *Tableau de la littérature française de Corneille à Chénier*, edited by André Malraux, did not appear until 1939. In it each individual author is handled by a different writer of the present. Sections dealing with French literature before the seventeenth century and since the end of the eighteenth, though in project, have never appeared.

⁴⁰ Every summer at the Abbey of Pontigny, philosophical, literary, and political discussions were held under the direction of Paul Desjardins. Gide was one of the chief instigators of those gatherings.

⁴¹ The *Literary News* is a weekly founded in 1922.

rected the proofs of the definitive edition of *Si le grain ne meurt . . .* which is to come out I don't know just when; perhaps not for several months. — Finished reading Montaigne's *Essais* and the (rather slow and repetitive) book by Bonnefon (at least the first volume) on *Montaigne et ses amis*.⁴² Did not feel enough energy in me to get ahead with *L'École des femmes*. To tell the truth, this book hardly interests me at all and my mind does not return to it spontaneously. It is not closely bound up with my present preoccupations, which I could more easily express in the study of Montaigne that I promised Malraux. In it I shall probably find a legitimate pretext for voicing some of the considerations closest to my heart.

Altogether a very middling period, in which I am losing contact with myself and with *reality*, pretending to live and, momentarily, even getting to the point of doubting whether or not I really exist. A fatigue such that I give up demanding anything of myself and let myself drift into mere living, as I should abandon myself to death.

Paris, 19 September

Mme Théo's remark about Charles Du Bos is excellent (after reading his long study on, or indictment of, me):

"He is assuring his salvation at your expense."⁴³

Cuverville, 20 September

Yes, I know that after several hours of practice I still manage to play in such a way as to satisfy myself, and even to be charmed as I rarely am at the concert. But if I drop it for a bit, even if only for two days, I am more at a loss than a beginner, and more so from year to year. And if I only particularly enjoyed reading new music; but no, getting a piece to a state of fugitive perfection (something I never do without first learning it by heart), this is how I employ all the time I spend at the piano.

At Saint-Clair went over the *Goyescas*.⁴⁴

25 September

Back in Paris for three days now. I have somewhat got back to the piano. What I wrote above is absurd; I have never played better.

I am going over the *Novellettes* by Schumann, to whom I had been somewhat unjust. It is true: that music almost totally lacks art, having a sort of rudimentary ingenuity, but it reveals a really gushing inspiration and a very authentic fervor. The quality of the soul is rather vul-

⁴² *Montaigne and His Friends* by Paul Bonnefon.

⁴³ *Le Dialogue avec André Gide* (*Dialogue with André Gide*) by Charles Du Bos appeared in 1929.

⁴⁴ Piano compositions by Granados.

gar, but the soul is after all charming, profoundly open to sympathy and wholly sincere. Wagner looks like a bluffer, compared to him.

4 October

Putting some papers in order, I recover, among old bills, the bills of the Royal Hotel of Biskra, from the time of Wilde and Douglas. They prove that I stayed in Biskra, in 1895, from 6 February to 20 March. I tear them up after having noted this reference.

Dictated no fewer than fourteen letters today; and there was not a one, or hardly a one, held over. I cannot call work this bustle, which I compare to the swimmer's effort to push aside the weeds. Received this morning a cable from C. de T., my American agent, telling me that the *Forum* refuses to grant me the delay I requested for *L'École des femmes*. I am almost amused by this obligation. At heart I have always loved *duty* and feel more worth while in it than in freedom. This is perhaps where I differ most from Montaigne. I should even be delighted if I knew where and how to work in peace — if only friends, admirers, and solicitors would leave me alone. There are moments now when I can see them as nothing but nuisances.

5 October

My greed contained much curiosity. Nothing displeases me and makes my conscience so ill at ease as too much expenditure at table. Yesterday young Gabriel B., whom I am lodging, took me to a little restaurant on the boulevard Saint-Germain, where it cost the two of us together sixteen francs. He was delighted; I too. "And admit that we aren't hungry any more," he kept saying gaily. I recall the period of the Foyer,⁴⁵ when Mme Théo and I, busy together from morning till night aiding refugees, made it a point of honor, when ordering our lunch, never to go beyond two francs. (We took our dinners at her house.) In that time of shortages it always seemed to me that I was taking away from others hungrier than I everything that went beyond the strictly necessary. This feeling has never left me, and I never enjoy a definite pleasure when I feel how much it costs. It is not that I am not interested in eating and I even pride myself on being a connoisseur in matters of cooking: I know what the dishes I am served are made of and can say what they need; but can never forget that if I take the white meat, the next person will have to take the drumstick. Consequently, when I serve myself first, I always take the drumstick; and all the more willingly since I really prefer it. I should like to settle in here

⁴⁵ The *Foyer Franco-Belge*, of which Gide was assistant director in 1914-16.

in such a way as to be able to sup every evening on a plate of porridge and a fruit.

I should be glad to write an *essay* on gluttony.

It is hard for me to believe that the healthiest, wisest, and most sensible thought is not also the one which, when expressed in writing, produces the most harmonious and most beautiful lines.

13 October

One way or another, I got, I am sure, more things into my bag than X. so carefully packed in his.

17 October

I close myself in with this job I must finish and for hours on end strive to keep my mind on it, preferring to think of nothing rather than to think of something else. Of this time I spend a third at the piano; I drowse another third, for I am weak enough to seek a bit of inspiration in smoking cigarettes, which poison me and climax my stultification. I lack genius to an unbelievable degree. I should like to go away.

Paris, 20 October

I am leaving this evening for Roquebrune in order to finish there *L'École des femmes* and go over with Dorothy Bussy the text of her translation that is to appear in the *Forum*. Everything must be finished before the Bussys' departure for Upper Egypt; that is to say, before the end of the month. Perhaps America's insistence was needed to make me finish this book, which ceased to interest me long ago.

There is hardly one of my books that I was in a position to write at the moment when I should have most enjoyed writing it; not one that, at one moment or another, has not drawn me backward.

I have been aging, for some time now, in a frightful way.

Do you think I should be able to give the precise shade of this feeling here if I had not first experienced it myself?

Roquebrune, 22 October

My fear, formerly, of letting myself be misled by laziness, while thinking I was paying attention to my fatigue. . . . Now, on the contrary, I force myself to rest and keep constantly saying to myself: No, poor old boy, this is not laziness; you are really very tired.

Nothing good is achieved unless the balance happens to be upset between the real world and the mind's creation, the latter appearing, for a time, more real than the other. As for that voluntary illusion, with age the mind becomes less and less capable of it — at least spontaneously; but more and more skillful, on the other hand, at getting the

best out of its luck and at considering all the cards in its hand, even the most insignificant ones, as trumps.

Self-indulgence. Advantageous postures.

I have written (in *Les Nourritures* or *L'Immoraliste*, I believe): "The day will come when, even to lift to my lips merely the water for which I have the greatest thirst, I shall no longer have enough strength" — or something close to this. . . . No, that is not the way it happens: along with one's strength, one's desires decrease also. If the glass no longer reaches the lips, this is also because the water seems less cool and because one is less thirsty.

The type of thoughts that it is probably inopportune to write. Or else find in oneself the strength to think that it is good for things to be thus. Such thoughts ape sincerity rather than being truly sincere.

Whoever would note down simply, from day to day, the cracks, the crumbling of his person, the gradual effect of age . . .

At one time, to accompany that sudden sensation of falling off to sleep, I used to dream that I was falling into an abyss; now, simply that I am stepping out on a stairway that isn't there.

Good heavens! Dostoyevsky likewise yields to reasons of art (just as Valéry claims that Racine did, who, he said, would have changed the character of Phèdre rather than write a bad line), but this is because he understood, just like Racine, that reasons of art are the least misleading. It was perhaps purely æsthetic necessities and exigencies that led him to his most daring and truest psychological notations. And vice versa. Academic form, conventional beauty, etc. are often responsible, in psychology, for the most monstrous mistakes. There are certain outlines that nothing but falsehood can fill.

A sort of strange moodiness inclines me to give up suddenly what would be most agreeable to me and what occasionally I have most consistently longed for; for the advantage of some indefinable superior satisfaction, it must be supposed, of an almost mystical nature . . . ? I don't really know. — Isn't it this that already, in the pilgrimage I made to the Grande-Chartreuse at the age of twenty, turned me away at the last moment by some secret dissuasion, so that, on the point of reaching my objective, I turned about and started off intoxicated with a different satisfaction and as if enriched by that privation. That sort of maceration plunged me at that time into a state of ineffable lyricism.

Is not unrelated, I believe, with solitary practices, which invite dream to dominate reality, so that one comes to prefer imaginary possession to real possession.

Cuverville, 4 November

Arrived yesterday evening; after a week at Roquebrune, where I had fortunately been able to finish *L'École des femmes* and go over with Dorothy Bussy her excellent translation, I had spent a day at Saint-Clair and one at Carcassonne with Alibert, with whom I am more in tune than with anyone else. I deplore a certain prolixity in his writing (which he does not have at all in conversation) that often drowns out the newest, wisest, and boldest elements in his thought. I rest in his company because I am able to be utterly natural without any fear of conflict or lack of comprehension. I marvel at how little his judgments and his thought have allowed themselves to be falsified or penetrated by considerations of prudence or affection, and find in his company the most precious of consolations. I do not see a single subject that I fail to enjoy broaching with him, and there is even a certain sense of the comic that I share with him, so that in his company my mind takes an equal pleasure in concentrating and relaxing.

5 November

Whether I write more easily? . . . Facility offers only common-places and ready-made formulas; just what I reject. More and more difficult toward myself, and more and more particular.

Do not force oneself to think, but note down at once every thought that comes.

Radio from the Tour Eiffel. An unknown pianist (unknown to me) comes and murders Chopin's seventeenth *Prelude*. Are there people who go into raptures over this? I see nothing in it but an almost hideous vulgarity, affectation, and stupid sentimentalism. Why hasten the tempo in the middle of each measure? Can't it be seen that such false agitation drives out all the charming mystery of the piece? Why not let the melody rise up and gradually free itself from the accompaniment; why reduce to a position of supernumeraries those notes that are wedded to the melody and make the latter shine by dimming everything that surrounds it, as if through fear that the imbecile audience will be unable to make it out sufficiently? I have a horror for that technique of playing up the melody and feel it to be most contrary to Chopin's æsthetic. With the exception of a few *cantabiles* in the manner of Bellini, I hold that, from top to bottom of the keyboard, everything must be utterly homogeneous, so that the melodic part remains deeply embedded in the friendly atmosphere created by the other voices, which evoke a constantly shimmering immaterial landscape.

Cuverville, 15 November

What I find here is not rest; it is torpor.

I am going over Bach's *Inventions* in two or three voices (in the Busoni edition). What strength, what equal mastery even in the apparently lightest pages, and how little that sort of musical logic (to which the contrapuntal method obliges him) hampers the statement of his thought! . . .

I find in Sainte-Beuve's *Port-Royal* (II, 212) this amazing remark of St. Augustine, which might well serve as an epigraph for Massis's book: ⁴⁶

"We who know what you think cannot be ignorant of how and in what sense you say these words." It is, as Sainte-Beuve says, "concluding from the sense to the words, rather than from the words to the sense" (p. 427). Thus it is that for a long time all natural phenomena served to prove that Nature "abhors a vacuum."

It is not suitable to say: the age at which the turbulence of the flesh takes refuge in thought — for that turbulence existed in thought just as much then, but it is more noticeable now that the turbulence of the flesh is tempered.

I assure you that the feeling of *freedom* can plunge the soul into a sort of anguish (explain and develop).

19 November

These "dictated pages" ought to be something quite different. Those of the last few days do not satisfy me at all.⁴⁷ They try too much to resemble the written sentence. I glimpse the possibility of a special form in which thought would communicate itself more directly. One would have to accept incorrect expressions, violences to chronology, and give up all vanity, all anxiety to write well. Just getting into a new habit, probably. I should like not even to try to form my sentences. Begin without any preconceived outline. Without knowing very well in advance what I want to say. But the habit of logic is so imperious that the mind suffers when it ceases to submit to it. It often forces thought into a mold that amputates and cuts it into blocks.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Gide is doubtless referring to the second volume of Massis's critical essays entitled *Jugements*, in which he condemns Gide among others.

⁴⁷ Reference to pages torn out. [A.]

⁴⁸ Gide did extract from his *Journals* a number of *Dictées* ("Dictated Pages") which were published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* for July 1929 and later in the volume *Divers* (*Miscellany*).

Cuverville, 21 November ⁴⁹

What the notion of time can become in a dream; — nothing is more mysterious. Generally a dream represents merely a succession of images, but it sometimes happens that the emotion aroused by certain ones among them presupposes the existence and recognition of a past. . . .

I dreamed last night that I met my brother-in-law Marcel at some exhibit or other of sculpture. Together we were admiring some architectural decorations copied from some Versailles or Trianon. At that moment I said to my brother-in-law that they were the exact reproduction of those I had admired at the Louvre Museum that very morning, and, at once, it seemed to me that I had previously dreamed that visit to the Louvre of which I was speaking. I say "dreamed," for that visit, which I truthfully said I had made and which was suddenly represented in my mind *in the form of a recollection*, remained exactly in the very atmosphere in which I then was; that is to say, in the atmosphere of dream. And can one remember a dream in a dream? Perhaps the sensation of a recollection implied no preceding image. But then what could that very precise sensation of a *recollection* be made of? Did it involve at that very moment a more distant and somewhat blurred image like those of memory? For at that very moment when, in that dream, I spoke of it to my brother-in-law, I saw again precisely (but in the form of a recollection) that previous visit to the Louvre. I saw again those same ornaments, or, at least, experienced that odd sensation of merely being in the act of seeing them again, of having already seen them a short time before; and I even remembered exactly that, on that visit to the Louvre, another person who was with me (I don't know who) had told me the name of the artist — which I was now striving in vain to recall, finding in its place only the name of Pigalle, which I knew was not the right one. So that, fearing to be corrected by my brother-in-law, I kept from mentioning it.

Upon waking I remembered this dream in rather great detail; the second part at least, for it was impossible for me to be sure whether I had really first dreamed that original visit to the Louvre or simply dreamed that I remembered it; and, as I said above, that is just where the mystery lies.

I find that mystery just about the same — although based on quite different elements — in the impression of *surprise* that certain dreams provide, though we ourselves are the sole, unconscious artisans of all the elements that combine with a view to provoking that emotion of surprise. I shall not be understood without an example. Here is one: this is a dream that goes back more than ten years; it must therefore have made a deep impression for me to remember it. I was traveling

⁴⁹ Dictated. [A.]

with X. (a feminine character; I don't remember who, but that doesn't matter), and this took place at Rouen or Amiens, where we had just (probably) visited the cathedral. We go into, or more exactly: we happen to be in a pastry-shop where I am choosing cakes or candies for X., which we are planning to take with us. A salesgirl takes them, wraps them in paper, then, picking up a very delicate pair of scissors, begins to use them to finish the package in an amazing manner that I watch out of the corner of my eye while I approach the cashier to pay. Whether candies or cakes, I knew that I had chosen about five francs' worth. "That will be twenty francs," said the cashier; and when I showed my astonishment: "Oh!" she exclaimed, "monsieur, it's because of the *Gothic package*." My surprise at these words was so great that it woke me up (or, if you prefer, a sudden awakening immediately emphasized my surprise), and that is what allowed me to remember that dream so well. My amazement on awaking, my wonder as I thought it over, was that I had so carefully favored that surprise. It seemed to me that everything had been invented with the sole purpose of leading up to that word, just as it would have happened in real life; but how could it be explained then that I so little expected it? It was I who had prepared it and I knew nothing of it.

I had told this dream to Mme Théo, who at once told me another dream which again involved that same inexplicable feeling of surprise. In the afternoon she had received a certain rather beautiful piece of cloth from which she thought she could have a bodice made, and, with this in mind, had taken the cloth to a dressmaker. The following night she dreamed that she was going to see the dressmaker; I was with her; and as soon as we entered the fitting-room, we both saw, laid out on an armchair, the bodice in question. It was obvious that the cloth had been irretrievably spoiled, that the bodice was hideous, unwearable. It gave her a great shock. And, seeing how upset she was, I approached her and exclaimed, as I patted her back in friendly fashion:

"Don't be upset, dear, you will find a way to fix it up."

Turning around toward me, she then exclaimed in stupefaction:

"So you are calling me 'dear' now!"

And I replied at once:

"My dear friend, I always do on such occasions."

Obviously there was in this dream too an inexplicable displacement. She had given herself an unconsciously prepared surprise, for which, immediately afterward, she had given herself an explanation that, however preposterous it was, had none the less been foreseen by her, without her knowing it.

Cuverville, 23 November

Yesterday finished *Beauchamp's Career* in the translation, unfortunately rather pasty and sadly inelegant, by A. M.⁵⁰ It is truly one of the most extraordinary books I have ever read. Vast unendurable regions, not so much arid as frightfully bushy, in which, as in the bush on the banks of the Logone, you lose your sense of direction; spots where you simply mark time; tedious passages sufficient to make you drop the book twenty times; then, occasionally, for pages on end, you soar along at heights that only the greatest attain.

This book leaves the mind aching, surprised, disconcerted, wondering whether it shouldn't be taken as a satire of the spirit of utopia, of humanitarianism, of equalitarianism, and even, more profoundly, of philanthropy and sacrifice; a satire even of love. The last pages invite one to think so. Above all, they invite one (as does the whole book) to think.

I cannot yet manage to understand why certain scenes, certain dialogues in this book are *treated* and others passed over in silence, completely skipped; in particular certain conversations that, among others, one would have liked to know. "Beauchamp obtained the information that his cousin Cecil had read out the letter of Dr. Shrapnel at Mount Laurels." (II, p. 86.)

Likewise Beauchamp's big conversation with his uncle, so long awaited, is replaced by this mere sentence: "B. stepped into the drawing-room. His cheeks were flushed; he had been one against three for the better part of an hour." (II, p. 90.) And likewise we shall never know the great explanation between the uncle and nephew save by these words: "Ordinarily the lord of Steynham was not out of his bed later than twelve o'clock at night. His door opened at half-past one. Not a syllable was exchanged by the couple in the hall. They had fought it out." (II, p. 114.) Likewise, again: "It was under Mrs. Wardour-Devereux's eyes, and before a man named Lydiard, that, never calling to him to put him on his guard, Nevil fell foul of him [Captain Baskett] with every capital charge that can be brought against a gentleman, and did so abuse, worry, and disgrace him as to reduce him to quit the house to avoid the scandal of a resort to a gentleman's last appeal in vindication of his character." (II, pp. 158-9.)⁵¹

⁵⁰ George Meredith's novel, in a translation by Auguste Monod, appeared in French in 1928.

⁵¹ It would be worth examining, in the English text, whether it was merely A. M. who neglected to translate these missing conversations, or else, at the request of the publisher, anxious to reduce the volume in length, allowed them to be suppressed. [A.] The passages have been reinstated above as they appear in the English novel, where Meredith himself has avoided recording the conversations.

24 November

What a mistake it is to believe that by letting oneself go naturally, one is, or becomes, the most personal! Only commonplaces and clichés come to one naturally and right off. . . . Whence the danger of these "dictated pages" that I am trying out.

Vulgarity absorbs the man who "lets himself go." The heavy law of gravity holds us all. I wish for a long, forced march in the jungle to disengage my thought somewhat. The most individual, most particular, rarest qualities in each of us obey laws too, but exquisite ones. Through the belly, we all belong to the mass . . . etc. Starting-point of my thought; too busy, too constantly disturbed to follow it out.

DETACHED PAGES

When intelligent people pride themselves on not understanding, it is quite natural that they should succeed better than fools. The camel has been discussed, the eye has been discussed, the needle has been discussed, and people have above all discussed to find out to what degree the rich man could or could not approach the kingdom of heaven. Yet what is more luminous than the word of the Gospel? It should be clear to the blindest that for "a camel to pass through the eye of a needle" is the Oriental equivalent of "jumping over the moon" or some other image of which the utter absurdity tends to exaggerate the *impossible*.

It simply means: it is *impossible*, forever impossible, and among impossible things there is none more completely impossible than this: a rich man in the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is formed of the surrender of riches.

Nothing is heavier, more important than this: necessity of option between the temporal and the spiritual. The possession of the other world is based on the renunciation of this world.

Consequently, even the Gospel according to Mark, the oldest, had already felt the influence of Paul. It is essential above all to explain that influence.

Certainly Christ and his disciples on their way to Jerusalem were marching toward triumph — Christ with the certainty of his divine vocation. There was, in the eyes of the world at least, complete failure. This is the first thing that it was important to save. It was essential to work for the justification of the cross, of the torment, of the ignominy to which that career seemed to lead. It was essential to show that that end had been foreseen, show that it was necessary to the accomplishment of the Scriptures and likewise to the salvation of humanity. And that Christ died *because of sinners*, or *for sinners* . . . the distinction

was mystically so delicate that it was easy to pass from one to the other and that a happy confusion grew up in favor of St. Paul's preaching. People ceased to see Christ anywhere save on the cross; the cross became the indispensable symbol. It was the mark of ignominy that it was important to glorify most. Only thus could appear as triumphant, in spite of everything, the work of the one who had called himself the Son of God.

That was indispensable in the beginning; for the official recognition and propagation of the doctrine.

But, after all, that ignominious end, though it became indispensable to the dogma, was in no wise a part of the very teaching of Christ. It was on the contrary its check, or rather the supreme obstacle over which the lesson of happiness (see the words spoken on the cross) was likewise to triumph.

No matter: once that doctrine had mastered minds and hearts — that is to say, when people felt they had a right to seek out Christ *before* the torment, and in the fullness of his *joy* — it was too late: the cross had overcome Christ himself; it was Christ crucified that people continued to see and to teach.

And thus it is that that religion came to plunge the world into gloom.



The following pages were written between 1922 and 1928 (?). I thought then, I don't know just why, that I did not have much longer to live and was inclined to look upon *Les Nouvelles Nourritures*, of which these pages were to be a part, as a sort of testament which, in my plan, was to form a tardy counterpart for my *Nourritures terrestres*.⁵² These pages that I wrote from day to day, I was to distribute them throughout the volume in certain places that I had assigned to them in advance; many other pages, interpolated among them, were to support and motivate them, but I shall probably never write them. And I fear very much that this book may remain unfinished. It is not so much that my thoughts have changed direction, but events have allowed them to take a more definite orientation.

Few sentences have vexed me as much as this one: "What is everything that is not eternal?" What an absurd conception of the world and of life manages to cause three quarters of our unhappiness! Through loyalty to the past, our mind refuses to realize that tomorrow's joy is

⁵² *The Fruits of the Earth* appeared in 1897 and *New Fruits of the Earth* did not come out until 1935, though a few pages had been included in the *Selections from André Gide* of 1921.

possible only if today's makes way for it; that each wave owes the beauty of its line only to the withdrawal of the preceding one; that each flower owes it to itself to fade for the sake of its fruit; that the fruit, unless it falls and dies, cannot assure new blooms, so that spring itself rests on winter's grief.

I cannot believe in Nietzsche's "eternal return," but I like that need of optimism which makes him invent it, in order to balance regrets with *insouciance*.



For a long time, for too long a time (yes, until these very last years) I have gone to great efforts to believe that I was wrong; to accuse myself, to contradict myself; to bend my way of seeing, feeling, and thinking to the way of others, etc. I noticed that the most obstinate in their own direction are ordinarily stupid; and I did not set much store by stupidity. But one would have said that my own thought frightened me, and this is the source of the need I felt of attributing it to the heroes of my books in order the better to separate it from me. Some who refuse to see a novelist in me are perhaps right, for it is that that recommends the novel to me, rather than telling stories.



Paul Laurens told me of having met by chance an old classmate of the studios he had not seen in twenty-five years. In the beginning they feign great delight at seeing each other again, as is fitting, then they soon realize they have nothing in common but a few vague memories; the conversation wanes rapidly; but suddenly X. says:

"Oh! I was about to forget . . . something very important . . . last year, old man, I got converted. Yes indeed!"

"Well," asks Paul Laurens, "are you satisfied?"

"Oh! you know, old man, Catholicism . . . is corking."

A few moments of silence. They decide to separate. But at the moment of shaking hands the other one repeats again:

"Besides, you know, old man . . . ab-so-lute-ly corking!"

Paul told this in a charming way, just as I think Fromentin would have done.



For a long time people blamed me for what they called my unrest; then, when they began to realize that that unrest belonged not to me but to the creatures I depicted and that I could not depict them as restless without having ceased to be restless myself, they blamed me for having found calm and that very serenity which allowed me to produce. This is because they did not suppose, would not admit that

unrest could lead elsewhere than to that harbor where they themselves have dropped anchor, and because, so long as they thought me adrift, they could still hope that I would come and seek refuge among them.



Are so many words necessary? and the concentration of the mind, the effort to construct a plot, in order to stretch before the reader that motley embroidery which, for a time, shimmers before him and veils reality. On the other hand, it is to that reality that I want to recall him constantly, to reveal it to him in a better light, to present it to him as even more real than he has been able to see it hitherto.



The suppression, the hurdling, of everything in the Gospel that inconveniences them. But all those inconveniences, which their orthodox explanations will never succeed in dispelling, will take on a greater and more accusing importance the longer they are hidden under a bushel.



Not to make every effort toward pleasure, but to find one's pleasure in effort itself is the secret of my happiness.



But since they cannot hope for salvation by the means that he offers them, he thus removes all hope from them.

I should not like to injure anyone's hope without immediately setting another hope in its place, and I always strive toward this. I should like to be able to believe in eternal life, not for my own happiness, but for the consolations that it allows to give.

But they, as soon as they possess that assurance, feel the need of casting a gloom over this life, in order to make necessary what will console us for it.



Do not turn away, through cowardice, from despair. Go through it. It is *beyond* that it is fitting to find a motive for hope. Go straight ahead. Pass beyond. On the other side of the tunnel you will find light again.



The odd thing, when speaking of *influence*, is that one almost never considers any but direct influences. Influence through protest is, in certain natures, at least as important; sometimes it is much more so,

though most often very hard to recognize. It is by no means always through affection, weakness, and need of imitation that our characters are bent. A somewhat strong nature yields more to reaction than to direct action. Those who oppose interest me more than those who follow; but I am still more interested in the very rare ones who neither follow nor oppose and yet are no more deaf than stupid.



That lack of curiosity of the flesh which precedes by far impotence and even the dying-out of desires, which makes the latter compromise and even ease their dominion, no, it is not apathy; but, the mind resuming the upper hand, it leaves the way open for moralizing.



Too often someone else's prejudice obliges us and, if only our sensibility is greater than our force of character, we let ourselves be absorbed by the image that we are aware someone else has formed of us. Yes, the presence of others deforms us and, in spite of ourselves, we assume for a time the virtues or vices they attribute to us. We make this or that gesture which is not natural to us because we feel that it is expected of us; since it is, for certain natures, very hard to resist what the imagination proposes.

Thus we are carried by opinion. Likewise the audience's confidence adds to the acrobat's self-assurance to make him succeed in an act that lack of confidence would upset. I should like to be one of those in whom the most timid could find more credit than he hopes; that he should feel indebted toward me, forced to demand of himself that virtue which I make him feel I am taking for granted.

12 January

Arrived this morning at Marseille in rainy weather. A nasty fine rain, gray and cold. Not a ray of sunlight in the whole sky, nor in my heart. Laid up with grippe for the past week, the first time I went out was to go to the Gare de Lyon, where I dined with Jean Schlumberger and Marc. Coughing spells kept me from sleeping; we were burning up after having feared freezing to death; traveling-companions not worth mentioning.¹ I am writing these lines in the dining-room of the Gouverneur Général Jonnart; my eye seeks from one table to another a companion with whom I might wish to talk. Moreover, no desire to talk, or to smile at anyone. And while we are finishing the eleven-o'clock meal, we weigh anchor.

13 January

A sea so calm as to make one sometimes wonder whether or not we are making any progress. A deserted sea; as uninhabited this morning as my brain. One wonders where the flying fish, porpoises, and dolphins have gone. If Arion fell overboard, he would go straight to the bottom. (Manner of speaking, for it is known that drowned men float, when their soul is not too heavily laden with sins.)

Very painful coughing spells last night again; it lasted about an hour, then yielded to a double dose of neonal.

This morning the passengers, the appearance of the sea and sky, everything seems to me so unappetizing that I go back down to my cabin to read a bit of *Oblomov*² and sleep, for I myself feel as uninteresting and unlikable as the others, as "the rest," as everything.

Low physical condition due to fatigue, doubtless. Stretched out on the deck, rather comfortably wrapped in my green shawl, I lie patiently in wait and watch (amused as at the age of fifteen when, calmly seated on the edge of the woods of La Roque, I used to see squirrels and rabbits make up their mind to reappear and shake themselves, nature on all sides become animate and give up its hypocritical and forced immobility) — my thoughts, somewhat timidly at first, come out of their burrows, scan the near horizon, risk a few jumps at first, and then set out inconsiderately in search of adventure.

Trace the itinerary and the topography.

¹ The last three words appear in English in the original.

² The novel *Oblomov* by Ivan Goncharov depicts the decay of the Russian gentry before the Revolution of 1917.

Influence (to be reworked); positions already taken, deeds already done; responsibilities already assumed — disregard them.

And always the question of humanity's listed value (very much exaggerated) — humanity at least such as it is, not such as it might be. From what direction can hope come? ³

Atheism. There is not a single exalting and emancipatory influence that does not in turn become inhibitory. Of the need of changing guides.

Around noon my mind finally freed from the neonal and the codeine I had to take last night, liberated also from a lot of annoying preoccupations, becomes marvelously active. If I were not at the common table, a bit curbed after all by my neighbors' looks, I should note down at once the main lines that I see becoming clear, with greater sharpness and vigor than ever — of the antagonism between Christ and God — of Christ's *error* (wonderful to explain why that error was intentional and necessary) of claiming that he was closely associated with God — leading to the cry, at last revelatory: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

God = nature; Christ = supernature.

Algiers, 13. six thirty

With the aid of Jupiter and Neptune, we had docked by two o'clock. Algiers seems to have changed so little that it is really not worth feeling so much older since the last time I saw it.

The moment when I feel most violently like leaving a town is when I have just arrived there. What squalor! What poverty! What approximations! What piddling "promises of happiness"! or rather: how few promises, and of what piddling happiness!

It would perhaps be sufficient to say that I feel very tired, with a somewhat painful spot at the base of my left lung which makes me fear severe coughing spells again tonight.

Diderot's article on Spinoza shocked me.⁴ One would sometimes like to see an author return to life, in order to recognize and draw some advantage from his errors. Diderot's blindness in regard to Spinoza, I cannot say whether it is more painful to me on his account or on account of Spinoza. He reproaches him for his "atheism"; at first one is surprised; it takes a bit of reflection to realize the moralizing position

³ See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 146.

⁴ In order to outwit the censor when he published his famous *Encyclopédie*, Diderot felt obliged to denounce vigorously the ensemble of Spinoza's ideas in the article on the man himself. But in other articles, such as the one on "Liberty," Diderot showed how fully he accepted Spinoza's doctrine.

of those great theists of the eighteenth century: Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, etc.

Algiers, 14

I became aware, around noon, that my gloominess this morning, despite a night of excellent sleep and such as I had not known for some time, came too, came especially, from the fact that I had not shaved, that my collar was dirty, my suit out of press from the last two nights when I had to go to bed dressed, my shoes not shined, etc. My eyes, my mind, could not fix on anything without finding something to scratch and make bleed. . . . A ring from Montherlant came very appropriately, like a cock's crow, to drive away the twilight phantoms. I went back up to wash, shave, change linen, suit, and thoughts.

15

Those lines from Goethe's *Prometheus* (in the very intelligent but a bit flabby and ineffectual study by René Berthelot) are truly as well translated as possible. I know what I am saying when I write this, having myself often tried to translate them and having given up because of the excessive difficulties. It seems to me that no stroke of the scalpel, to outline my inner likeness, went deeper (not even those of Nietzsche later on) than did, when I first read them at the age of twenty, these wonderful lines of *Prometheus*. Nothing I read of Goethe later on could modify that first incision, but simply finish it off and I should rather say: soften it.

Wisdom begins where the fear of God ends. There is not a single progress of thought that did not at first seem revolutionary, impious.

16

Slept, since yesterday, an unbelievable number of hours. Is it old age, an accumulation of fatigue, or an unhealthy disposition? A real orgy of forgetfulness to which I was invited by the cold and ugliness of the weather, my utter lack of curiosity with regard to Algiers, and a complete absence of all desires. (No other books at hand than the dull and second-rate *Oblomov* by Goncharov.) Having gone out after a prolonged siesta, I was driven back by the rain and again slept more than an hour.

This morning I am packing and getting ready to move into the little apartment that Montherlant is subletting me. I discover, a few doors beyond, a well-stocked bookstore where I buy a Vauvenargues, *Pride and Prejudice*, and an English dictionary (Chambers).

I do not believe that I am very hard to please in matters of comfort; but there is a certain number of degrees below which my thought coagulates and I cease to understand even what I am reading.

Every time I have picked up Vauvenargues again, I have been disappointed.

I search my memory whether ever such empty, such dull hours . . . I search in vain.

17

Another walk, yesterday evening, above the town; I return by way of the Kasbah and recover, if not my intoxication of the first visit, at least the elements of that intoxication. Had I lived less chaste at the age of twenty, I should give up with less difficulty, it seems to me.

This little apartment, where I have moved in, is frigid; I can keep somewhat warm only in bed under a pile of coats and blankets. And this morning, not an aspiration, not a desire. The sky is gray like my heart. I make up my mind to take a room at the hotel again. I buy a hat that will make me less noticeable than the one Marc was right to advise me not to take. Is it merely the cold that reduces me thus? If I didn't have the means of paying for a good meal, what should I become? I set down here shamelessly and at length my lamentation, in order to blush for it, I think, a little later on, and in the hope of at least learning something from it.

When I think of all that is spared me: tooth- and stomach-aches, heart-aches, and money troubles, I wonder that there are not more people to jump into the river, and judge that humanity, all in all, shows remarkable guts. It is perhaps also because humanity lacks that little bit of courage that is necessary to end it all.

But having last night, contrary to my custom, used a chamber pot, I notice in the morning that my urine is extraordinarily cloudy. Delight at being able to ascribe to the body the mind's weakness!

18

What a small number of hours, of minutes, every day are really spent in living! For a few triumphal oases, what vast deserts to cross!

Yesterday evening, at the restaurant table next to mine, a big, hoary man asserts (in such a tone that not one of his three companions dares to contradict him): "To begin with, there is water everywhere." And twice he repeats this remark, peremptorily, like a man who is not taken in by the desert and who goes beyond appearances. He must be a diviner.

I have always loved duty and it is when I am most free that I feel farthest from happiness. Yes, farther from happiness the freer I was to seek it.

Marc does not wait until the flowers of a bouquet are wilted before renewing them. He doesn't like to repeat the same stories, even in the presence of those who have not yet heard them, nor serve up again the same witticisms.

How he must be put out of patience at times by that need, quite instinctive in me, of economy, of making everything that he replaces and renews so easily last as long as possible! His quite instinctive need of renewal is also part of his grace and I should be most ungracious to blame him for it; it is thereby that he differs most from me and it is what I most like in him. It is doubtless thereby, through this contrast, that I have learned the most about myself and learned to scorn my parsimony.

One can overindulge even in the "*ne quid nimis*," and it amounts to misusing the doctrine of "nothing in excess" to take too much of it.

20 January

I write to Marc: "Out of fear of living too much through you, I wanted to get along without you for a while; I have ceased to live."

Yet this morning I feel a bit less like a waif; I write three letters without too much difficulty. The weather is beautiful. . . .

I was probably extraordinarily tired when I left Paris and I must accept this torpor as a necessary rest.

21 January

What I call "fatigue" is old age, and nothing can rest one from it, but death.

Of all this "bad because contrary to nature" what is the worse? To refuse oneself to pleasures as a young man or, as an old man, to still seek them? There is a certain felicity of the flesh that the aging body pursues, and ever more uselessly, if it has not been sated with them in youth. Too chaste an adolescence makes for a dissolute old age. It is doubtless easier to give up something one has known than something one imagines. It is not what one has done that one regrets here; but rather what one has not done and might have done. And one's regret even takes on the somber color of repentance.

It seems to me that here too what most induces me to renunciation are æsthetic reasons. Old hands soil, it seems, what they caress; but they too have their beauty when they are joined in prayer. Young hands are made for caresses and the sheathing of love; it is a pity to make them join too soon. Yes, that gesture of prayer simulates the mystic embrace of the impalpable after loving arms have closed on the flight of reality and on absence.

At sea, 22 January

Anxiety for style: a bad sign. Decidedly I cannot keep it up; I board ship again. Constant preoccupation with the little time that is left me to live; one cannot put it to a more stupid use. Like someone constantly looking at his watch for fear of missing his train. "Don't get so worried about it; it won't leave without you."

23

Read with great pleasure (at Algiers) Donnay's *Amants*,⁵ which I did not yet know. Not much to say of it; yet nothing but praise. Incomparably superior to everything Bataille ever wrote.

Paris, 24

Very good late afternoon yesterday in Marseille at Auguste Bréal's. Almost finished *Pride and Prejudice*, begun in Algiers, in which Jane Austen achieves perfection, but in which one realizes rather readily (as in Marivaux) that she will never risk herself on heights exposed to too strong winds. An exquisite mastery of what can be mastered. Charming differentiation of the secondary characters. Perfect achievement and easy triumph of decorum. What a charming woman she must have been! Incapable of any intoxication, but almost forcing one to think: it is better thus.

In Paris again. I come back rested; feel alive again. Did I do right to return? No more empty question, and to which the reply matters less. Whatever one does, do not ask oneself whether or not one was right to do it, but rather get the best out of it, and from the situation in which one has put oneself.

25

Returned to the piano, which I had not opened since . . . (?) Went over the *Caprice in B minor* by Paganini-Schumann.

Yesterday evening got myself to go to a good restaurant and to dine without considering the expense, a thing that had happened to me, so far as I can remember, but once, very long ago (I mean when I am alone and have no one to treat). Went to Marius's, rue de Bourgogne; ordered oysters, a sole, peas, and stewed pears. Everything was excellent and cost only three times as much as my ordinary meals. It always seems to me that egotism is most shamelessly manifested in gluttony. The other memorable solitary meal was at the Hotel Saint-Georges of Mustapha, where I had stopped after a frightful crossing and which I left the following day moreover. A heavy sea had made us eight hours late; I had been horribly sick; it seemed to me that

⁵ *Lovers*, first produced in 1895, is a psychological study of love and separation that has long been a popular comedy of the French repertory.

nothing would be good enough to cure me. I had chosen the best room in the best hotel; had a meal sent up that I washed down with champagne. All this more foreign to me than Algiers itself, where I believe that I had landed for the first time. . . .

29 January

I shall manage to prove to myself that this autumn period is the most beautiful in life — if one takes it right.

No more than to look upon youth merely as a promise is it fitting to see in old age nothing but a decline. Each age is capable of a particular perfection. It is an art to convince oneself of this, to pay attention to what the years bring us rather than to what they take away, and to prefer gratitude to regrets.

For the last three days I have got back to the piano. Excellent practice.

Corrected the proofs of my *Montaigne*.⁶ On reading it, it seems to me that I was so careful not to force anything that my own position, with regard to the philosophy I disengage from the *Essais*, will appear very vague. Yet the period of hesitations is past; but how hard it seems to be to say what I now should like to assert!

30 January

You know very well that I was not free to write other books except out of cowardice and by avoiding what I considered my duty.

31

A certain melancholy in connection with the *Volpone* that Zweig and Romaines have just put on the stage.⁷ There are few plays that I should have so much wished to translate and that I felt more appropriate to my hand. I spoke to Copeau of it a long time ago, almost announced it; and, probably, if the Vieux-Colombier had lived. . . . But I believe that, out of respect for the text, I should not have dared to *adapt* it, as Zweig and Romaines have done; and very happily, I believe. At least I have the consolation of knowing that that admirable play is perfectly reclaimed. The real sorrow would have been seeing it ruined. But the theatre bores me so that I cannot make up my mind to go and see it.

⁶ The *Essay on Montaigne* had appeared in the quarterly review *Commerce* in 1928. Its sequel, *Following Montaigne*, first came out in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in June 1929; later the same year they were published together in a volume.

⁷ Jules Romaines translated Stefan Zweig's adaptation of Jonson's *Volpone*, which Dullin staged at the Atelier.

6 February⁸

Whether works of art or people, we judge everything according to a certain bias, and the judgment of others predisposes us. A certain book strikes us as the less good the more we have heard it praised to excess, or all the better since a certain critic has spoken ill of it. La Fontaine would have enjoyed Baruch less if he had not discovered him himself. And how much my admiration for Jane Austen is embarrassed to hear her compared to Shakespeare! A critic very rarely opens a book without being well or badly disposed to it in advance, and this prejudgment, which the English call "prejudice," disposes us, often without our knowing it, to being particularly sensitive to the qualities or shortcomings of the author. According to the nature of minds, some will praise with the crowd and even exaggerate; others will stand in opposition who are inclined to express the reverse of the common opinion.

Originality is perhaps never so rare as in matters of judgment; and never less noticeable, for an opinion, though it is original, does not necessarily differ from the accepted opinion; the important thing is that it does not try to conform to it. I can admire Bossuet, La Fontaine, or Voltaire for the same reasons as the most banal literary handbook and not suffer at all from this. But I can perceive later that some of my admirations were not altogether sincere and that my judgment on that point was merely conforming.

A revision of values is useful at a certain age; but it takes a singular liberty of mind to get away from the accepted. I know subtle intelligences, profoundly capable of appreciating fully and delicately in a work the qualities that are pointed out to them, but just as incapable of discovering new ones as of inventing reasons for admiring less works that have long been extolled.

10 February⁹

Yesterday evening, a few friends having gathered together, a discussion arose among Berl, Malraux, Schiffrin, and Robert de Saint Jean; rather heated but rather incoherent nevertheless, despite the preciseness of the remarks and the extraordinary eloquence of Berl and Malraux. I tried to take part in it, but had the greatest difficulty merely following them and seizing their thoughts. Even more in discerning my own and expressing it.

It was agreed that our contemporary literature gives a very inexact image of the state of minds today. Berl, upholding the thesis he had already exposed in a remarkable "pamphlet,"¹⁰ claimed that our liter-

⁸ Dictated. [A.]⁹ Dictated. [A.]¹⁰ *Mort de la pensée bourgeoise* (*Death of Bourgeois Thought*), published in 1929 and dedicated to André Malraux.

ary men today, and particularly our novelists, depict conventional feelings that are no longer current and thus remain extraordinarily behind the time.

I agree. But the question seems to me badly put. And I believe, with Wilde, that the most important artists do not so much copy nature as they precede it, so that, on the contrary, nature seems to be imitating them. I believe, moreover, that authentic feelings are extremely rare and that the immense majority of human beings are satisfied with conventional sentiments, which they imagine they really experience, but which they adopt without thinking for a minute of questioning their authenticity. People think they are feeling love, desire, disgust, jealousy, and they are living after the fashion of a current model of humanity which is proposed to them from earliest childhood. Sensations and thoughts form little packages of more or less arbitrary associations on which the names we give them eventually confer an appearance of reality. La Rochefoucauld's wonderful maxim: "There are people who would never have been in love if they had never heard of love," is applicable to many other sentiments; perhaps to all. It takes an extraordinarily alert mind to be aware of this. And it would be a great mistake to assume that the least cultivated people are the most spontaneous, the most sincere. Most often they are, on the contrary, the least capable of criticism, the most at the mercy of the model, the most disposed, through weakness or laziness, to adopting conventional sentiments and expressing them in ready-made phrases that spare them the trouble of looking for more precise ones — phrases into which their feelings slip, taking on as best they can the form of that borrowed shell.

At the beginning of the war, when I was not yet busy with the Foyer, being with Jean Schlumberger at Braffy (transformed into an infirmary or rest-home for convalescents), where the first wounded men had just arrived from the front, when we questioned some of them with an anxious curiosity, eager to get first-hand accounts at last, I remember our amazement on hearing those soldiers — from whom we were expecting at last a truthful account — naively recite the same sentences that could be read every day in the papers, sentences they had obviously read themselves and which they now put to use. It did not appear, alas! that their borrowing was limited to easy formulas and more or less well-turned phrases, high-sounding expressions that might have impressed them; even their sensations, their emotions, had accepted that dictation, submitted to it, and the formulas they recited did not even betray them. It was according to them, rather, that they had seen, felt, experienced. . . . Not one among them had been capable of providing the slightest original reaction.

I experienced the same disappointment when we were allowed to

read the recollections of a girl born blind, concerning which the newspapers, about ten years ago, made a great fuss. A most interesting document if it had been sincere — but not everyone can be sincere. Obviously the blind girl thought she was, and I am in no wise claiming that she was trying to impress us. But how exasperated we were, Drouin and I, by the perpetual appeal in those recollections to visual sensations that we knew the blind girl had never been able to experience! Yes indeed, I know what can be said, and that the use of words designating colors can indicate in the blind girl a continual preoccupation with colors, which she could not perceive, which she knew to exist however, and to which she could appeal in her speech to translate equivalent sensations, or ones she fancied to be equivalent; so that her very imagination could be sincere and revelatory. . . . Alas! we were aware above all of a certain need not to fall short, not to be left behind; to make people think: who would suspect that the person who writes this way is blind! And this, moreover, as simply as possible, and probably without being aware of it.

The great majority of phrases we use to express our emotions are comparable to checks without funds. But he is glad to accept them who is no better provided than the other.

12 February ¹¹

Montesquieu, in his observations on natural history, was concerned with the formation of mosses and mistletoe that he gathered on the trunks of trees. He refused to believe, with the "moderns," that both of those vegetations could be born of seeds, as the new theories claimed. That those theories prevailed over Montesquieu is not what concerns me here. But, picking up Montesquieu's descriptions and the observations on which he bases himself, however false may be the theories they inspire in him, I wonder at how correctly some of his sentences can be applied when I use them metaphorically to explain the way in which certain musical phrases of Chopin are born.

Montesquieu speaks of a slow thickening of the sap which gradually coagulates, becomes opaque, and naturally turns into a stem, whence new foliage springs.

It is precisely in this way that in Chopin's seventeenth *Prelude*, for instance, the melody must take shape. No tenor enters the picture here. The voice that sings can hardly be made out in the beginning; it remains profoundly involved and as if floating in the regular flow of the six quavers, where an impersonal heart beats. It most often happens that the pianist, in order the better to bring out his own emotion, thinks he must communicate a fever to this calm pulse, which I like, on the contrary, when utterly regular.

¹¹ Dictated. [A.]

I like the melody to rise in a quite natural way, as if by a foreordained blossoming forth; at least in the beginning of the piece, for as soon as it has developed, the melody bursts forth and clearly dominates, to fade away and be reabsorbed only at the end. I like its seeming to melt again into the atmosphere:

and the singing voice

*Subsides like a bird alighting. All is quiet.*¹²

Truly, twice in this prelude, in the two modulations in the sharp key, Chopin achieves the peak of joy. And, among many others, I shall be glad to cite those modulations as an example of that intense state in which joy is very close to tears. "O heart broken with joy," said Musset's *Lorenzaccio*.¹³

In the work of Chopin there are many more powerful passages, but there is none in which joy assumes a more tender, more confident, and purer accent. Everything is lost if, in that modulation in E major, the accent becomes triumphant. I want to find there a vague rapture, full of astonishment and surprise. Even more mysterious is the repetition in F-sharp major which immediately follows that in E. The heart cannot endure so much joy, it yields and, as soon as the supreme note is achieved, the B, as if achieved beyond all expectation, joy subsides. This B itself has nothing triumphant about it, and, after the crescendo of the bass, must be sounded only with the last bit of strength left.

1 March

After a succession of days so harried that I could not find a moment to recover myself, I feel lost if suddenly I find enough time to write.

5 March

I would not swear that at a certain period of my life I was not very close to being converted. Thank God, a few converts among my friends took care of this, however. Jammes, or Claudel, or Ghéon, or Charlie Du Bos will never know how instructive their example was for me. I repeat this to myself as I read in that monument of immodesty and unconscious self-indulgence, Charlie's journal.¹⁴ Throughout, it breathes an amazing need for self-admiration, joined to a naïveté such that it both provokes and disarms laughter.

¹²

". . . et la voix qui chantait

S'éteint comme un oiseau se pose; tout se tait."

Lines 709-10 of the narrative poem *Eviradnus* in Hugo's *Legend of the Centuries*.

¹³ In Musset's comedy *Lorenzaccio*, about the Florentine Medici.

¹⁴ *Extracts from a Journal* by Charles Du Bos appeared in 1931.

27 March

Very good period (thanks doubtless to a better regime) and this is why I have forsaken this notebook. At Cuverville, where I was able to spend only four days, read with the greatest interest Siegfried's *Les États-Unis*; excellent book which testifies to a deep competence.¹⁵ It provides the mind with new nourishment, which I shall keep in my gizzard to digest slowly later on. Protestantism, then, is capable of distorting the mind as dangerously as Catholicism; I suspected this from what I had already seen. But in France it maintains, in spite of everything, the virtue (and the prestige in my eyes) of the minority. One must see what it produces over there to become convinced that any religion whatever, as soon as it triumphs and imposes itself, satisfies man and advises against all progress. Meditated considerably on this subject; but my reflections are not ripe and it is better not to note anything down yet.

1 April

It is rather hard to understand today the rising up in arms against the *Encyclopédie*.¹⁶ I cannot read without sorrow (I believe I have already written it) Diderot's article on Spinoza, a monument of misunderstanding and injustice; not without stupor the article on "Christianity," an excellent apology for what I expected to see him attack, which he wrote perhaps in order to baffle the opposition. But I am much more shocked by the lack of intelligence of certain "philosophic thoughts" (I am speaking particularly of the second handling, that of 1770). There are some so stupid that they play into the hands of the adversary and force the somewhat sensitive reader into the camp of devout believers. It is not with wit, were it the most amusing in the world, that one can convince in these matters anyone but fools. The joke soon turns against the scoffer, and the Christian glories in these inoffensive darts that never reach his heart. The banterer who does not hesitate to have recourse to such arms reveals himself incapable of really understanding the Gospel. One cannot criticize healthily what one has not first thoroughly understood, and one cannot properly understand the Gospel without a profound commitment, of the heart as well as of the mind.

I do not willingly use the word *heart*. Yet I must in order to imply that the brain is bound up with the rest of the organism and that it can probably reason very well in the abstract, but that any abstract reasoning omits the most vital part of our being.

¹⁵ *The United States* by André Siegfried, a historical and critical study.

¹⁶ The eighteenth-century *Encyclopedia* of Diderot and the "*philosophes*," one of the great works of the Enlightenment.

Nantes, 2 April

What we call impulses of the heart is but the unreasonable jostling of our thoughts; it is still in the head that the drama is enacted, and it is again the brain that man needs in order to love. The sublime is unreasonable; but to declare that "great thoughts come from the heart" simply amounts to saying with Montaigne: "Nothing noble is achieved without chance," and that man cannot obtain anything much from himself through mere reasoning.

I let myself be taken away, by P. and Marc, on a little motor trip, which would be altogether charming if only I had a little time for writing. The motion of the auto, the unfolding of the landscapes, stir up my thoughts extraordinarily; the annoying thing is not being able to set down at once everything that occurs to me, which I try to retain, but of which the best often escapes me.

Paris, Sunday, 7 April

Reread in the auto a great part of *L'Homme* by Hello,¹⁷ in which very beautiful pages of rather penetrating criticism stand side by side with terrifying stupidities. The lack of composition of this book reflects the mystic disorder of that poor brain. He is too ready to scorn *reason*, having hardly any himself, and through absurdity he proves its great value despite himself. How could mysticism fail to reject composition? Order lies in not letting the eagle strangle the dove. But the dove flutters desperately as soon as it gets all the attention, as in Hello's book.

Read next Green's pamphlet against the French Catholics.¹⁸ A writing of the same type, likewise a warning. But I like its extravagance, its intentional refusal to adapt to contingencies, its protest against lukewarmness and mediocrity. A mind incapable of revolt and indignation is a mind without value. If Molière had known nothing but the resigned wisdom of a Philinte,¹⁹ he would not deserve our attention; or at least I like to feel that that very resignation is not without some bitterness and some refractoriness. One must resign oneself to many things; but not easily. Man can obtain nothing worth while from himself without putting himself out.

But what does this pamphlet prove? That, despite their gown, priests are men, and that the Holy Sacrament itself can do nothing against mediocrity.

¹⁷ *Man*, by Ernest Hello, first appeared in 1872.

¹⁸ Julien Green's *Pamphlet against the Catholics of France* appeared at the beginning of his career in 1924 under the pseudonym of Théophile Delaporte. Since then his writings have become increasingly Catholic.

¹⁹ The advocate of compromise in *Le Misanthrope*.

Finally read *The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*²⁰ (in translation). Strange that Goethe, who rises so high in the pagan heaven, remains, where Christianity is concerned, in such temperate regions.

Took a few notes in pencil; but I didn't have time to give a satisfactory form to my thought.

Returned to Nantes; been to Les Sables-d'Olonne, Pornic, Vannes, Locmariaquer, Quiberon; obliged to get back Friday afternoon on Marc's account.

Paganism's lack of understanding of Christianity, which Hello denounces most eloquently, has no equal but Hello's lack of understanding of what he calls *idolatry*. There are idolaters, and many of them, among Christians. Catholicism permits and encourages them. They are more abject and miserable than pagan idolaters because their religion is more distorted and debased in them and because they make it fall from a greater height; and also because superstition is closer to magic than to faith.

Abject is the only word that comes to mind as I read in *La Nouvelle Revue des jeunes* the fragment of Ghéon's long novel.²¹ Certainly he appreciates in Catholicism that illusory permission to create without effort. I say, illusory, for he does not create anything at all, and, thank God! he is not even aware that he is merely *discrediting*. Faith involves a certain blindness in which the devout soul delights; when it escapes the shackles of reason, it seems to itself to be at its height. It is merely shameless.

Devotion to the Holy Virgin. She is endowed with so many virtues that it is just as monstrous not to love her — as to believe in her.

10 April

I am learning by heart at the same time three new fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavichord* (first book), C major, E flat, and A major — and perfecting the ones I already know. Those in C major and E flat show to the best advantage only when played with the most exquisite delicacy and a complete differentiation and independence of the parts.

I have been able to give two hours to daily practice, since my last return from Cuverville, without reading or meditation having to suffer

²⁰ This is Book VI of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

²¹ Two fragments of *Les Jeux de l'enfer et du ciel* (*The Games of Hell and Heaven*) by Henri Ghéon, "a sort of *Human Comedy* as seen by God, the story of some twenty pilgrims and tourists, just men and sinners, on their way to visit the holy Curé d'Ars and persecuted by the demon," appeared in the second issue of *La Nouvelle Revue des jeunes*, a Catholic fortnightly review, in March 1929.

too much from it. But the devil take those intruders who "want only five minutes of your time. . . ."

What causes me the most difficulty, over which I have been struggling almost in vain for months, is the trills with a different occupation for the other fingers of the same hand (in particular in the little fugue in F-sharp major). I tell myself that it is absurd to devote a good half-hour every day to a difficulty I shall never overcome; which one cannot overcome without tackling it very young. I have even noted that my insistence brought on a sort of tensing of the muscles and that after that practice I had some trouble playing evenly other much easier fugues or preludes. There are certain perfections that one must wisely resign oneself never to achieve. My regret over this is much greater than for the countries I shall never visit. Absurd regrets, to which I forbid myself to surrender, but which nevertheless would make me a rather good teacher.

I wonder if one of the greatest marks of strength in an artist is not resolutely going ahead without granting too much importance to something that will not reveal his superiority.

I write this without too much believing in it, being inclined, on the contrary, to "neglect nothing" and to devote the most care to just what most discourages me: the transitions, the welding of joints, everything in which Flaubert recognized the master writer.

But this is the only excuse I find for the bad parts of Green's latest novel²² — and they are numerous: impossible dialogues (in particular the one between Grosgeorges and Guéret), artificially constructed characters (Mme Londe), impossible situation. . . . It would seem that it matters little to him, he is so eager to go ahead, to go on, to reach the parts where his power is clearly marked and that sort of somber genius which relates him to the greatest. A certain evenness of flow in the course of the narrative bothers me more; I should prefer it more like a torrent, with pauses, windings, disappearances, cascades. Doubtless he conforms a little too closely, for my taste at least, to the tradition of the well-made novel. But otherwise he would have to be willing often to dissatisfy his public, and this calls for a sort of courage of which very few are capable.

11 or 12 April

Yesterday spent almost three hours with Green. How I should have been attached to him if I had met him in my youth! I like everything in him; he is one of those for whom one would demand the best of oneself. Without beating about the bush I was able to tell him every-

²² *Leviathan*.

thing I have written above regarding *Léviathan*; but adding at once that I considered as a proof of value the very shortcomings of his book, and not having spent time or effort in trying to correct them.

He told me again that he had begun this book without a plan, without a definite outline, without at all knowing how his characters were going to act; that they surprised him and that, as soon as they began to live in him, he ceased to feel himself their master and could not foresee the outcome of the drama into which their passions hurled them. For instance, he had no idea of the importance that Mme Grosgeorges was going to assume, of the role that she was going to play. He speaks of all this with simplicity and one feels him to be utterly sincere. That subconscious logic on which the automatism of his characters depends eludes him, and I believe that it is better so. But, from the point of view of Freud, here is something of the greatest interest. The characters of *Léviathan*, the plot of the novel, everything is of the same stuff as our dreams and the projection on a black background of everything that does not come to light in life.

They will be responsible for a materialistic reaction even more to be feared than theirs. I cannot accept anyone's calling, as Gabriel Marcel does, "despiritualization" any effort of the mind that does not lead to religious mysticism, and, after all, any religious aspiration that does not lead to Catholicism. It appears that, in the face of that assertion, Brunschvicg got angry; he did right.

I am not indifferent, or lukewarm, and all my former fervor today turns against them. The conviction I have, which they force me to have, that their doctrine is mendacious and their influence harmful does not permit my mind that accommodating tolerance which people are too much inclined to believe a natural accompaniment of free-thought. Tolerance is no longer fitting today, for they descend upon everything that can no longer defend itself and protest against their dishonestly pious annexations.

That evenness of flow of which I spoke to Green is explained by his method of work and the fear he has, if he drops his characters for a moment, of not being able to find them very readily. He dares not and cannot leave them. But that is why the reader cannot leave them either.

A really powerful artist is he who knows how to turn even his shortcomings to advantage and to transform all the cards in his hand into trumps. (I believe I have already said this somewhere.)

Close and niggardly . . . yes, I know that I am; and I admit that I am to excess. But this is because I prefer with all my heart being able

to give what they who call me a miser are so willing to spend on themselves.

That good fellow of a guard (at La Sapinière) whose daughter was a "*stylo-dacténographe*" spoke of the "*chasses au long cours*" in which he had participated in his youth.²³

26 April

Visit to the Louvre (new rooms) and to the Luxembourg with Em., in Paris for a few days. Excellent Utrillos.

Already one can be amazed at the public's craze, in the past, for certain paintings that were then considered masterpieces. Lamentable falling off. Of those that last and "hold up" there are very few that did not at first seem paradoxical and almost monstrous. Those that pleased at once by satisfying a passing taste on the part of the public have no other interest now than that of revealing how transitory that taste was. This is the way we see today, in literature, the plays of Dumas *fil*s and shall see tomorrow those of Bataille. There would be a great educative value in being able to glance rapidly over the books of a library as one can get an over-all view of the paintings of an epoch grouped together on one wall.

Yesterday, after a meeting at rue Visconti where there were only five of us (Desjardins, Jean Schlumberger, Du Bos, Fernandez, and I) to make decisions about the *décade* of this summer ²⁴ — Charlie walks back with me to the *N.R.F.* Constrained conversation, in which one shelters from shock everything one used to talk of, everything dear to one — and the end of which is marked by Charlie's tipping his hat ceremoniously. I do not know what I am to see in it: contempt? scorn? need of emphasizing the distance that Charlie's conversion sets between us? And Charlie, seeing me keep my hat on (for such an attempt at ceremony between us seems to me ridiculous), did he imagine on my behalf contempt, coldness, need of emphasizing a feeling of superiority which is utterly foreign to me? . . . Had I in turn tipped my hat to him, it seems to me that he could have seen in this salutation nothing but irony. . . . No, I see in that ridiculous gesture only an instinctive and irresistible need of assigning himself the best part, and what he takes for the desire for *perfection*; the need of being able to say to himself: "With Gide, again, as with everyone, as always and

²³ The regular term for stenographer or shorthand-typist is *sténo-dactylographe*; "*chasses au long cours*" would be "seagoing hunts," since the expression *long cours* is used only in connection with the sea.

²⁴ This meeting was held at the *Union pour la vérité* to discuss the program for the next session at Pontigny.

everywhere, I was *perfect*." So that I, on the other hand, I looked like a boor. And since, moreover, I felt him to be tormented and anguished, that meeting left me very ill at ease.

I should smoke less if I tried less to smoke less.

I have had to learn egotism all over again and convince myself that without egotism I should not manage to *make a success of myself*; and, besides, from egotism as I understand it neither heroism nor abnegation is excluded.

I am by nature little inclined to egotism; by the end of my early childhood my love for my cousin took me outside of myself; but in the beginning of my life my eyes were always on myself, as were those of my parents, of whom I was the only child.

Roquebrune, 14 May

I was waiting with Dorothy Bussy, on the edge of the road, for the train that was to take us to Menton. Not far away three strangers, a man and two women, were also waiting. (Foreigners, certainly, and tourists.) The man with already white hair, the women noticeably younger; all three of them thick, meaty, with a hoarse, loud way of talking. I should probably not have been able to recognize right away that they were Dutch. "What vulgarity!" Mme Bussy said to me. "And to think that you took them for English! Just see them eat!" And in fact from a huge shopping-basket they take out food that they begin gluttonously to stuff themselves with. — "And, to begin with, nothing is so unpleasant to me as to see other people eating when I am not eating myself." Since we have just got up from the table, I offer her a stick of chewing-gum, which she refuses. Ah! now they have reached the effusions; one of the two women has embraced the man, who seems to be fainting and whom she covers with kisses; her clucking made me turn round: "Gustave! . . . Gustave . . . Oh! . . ." But, to our great surprise, we see the man decrease, melt, slip slowly from the arms of his wife, who goes on stammering ever more frantically: "Gustave! Gustave!"

And now the man is on the ground, having probably suffered a stroke, his eyeballs turned in their sockets and his mouth gaping. We hasten to help him up, to seat him on the wall of the road, or better on a chair, which the tavern-keeper's wife brings on the run. The tavern-keeper is following her, offering cognac, vinegar, and spirits of mint; my companion holds out a glass of water. And at first I am angry to see the Dutch wife, while she is caring for her husband, not give up a half-eaten strawberry or cherry tart that she was doubtless in the act of eating, when, suddenly, seeing the object more closely, I realize that it is a set of false teeth that slipped out of her husband's mouth at the

moment of his fall, which she is now trying to put back in place without being noticed, turning her back to the public through a sense of decency, sheltering herself and sheltering him as best she can. Poor good people who now seem to me so pitiable! How could I have been so mistaken about them at first! Let us be careful of such unsympathetic judgments: one runs the risk of taking dental plates for tarts. . . .

Written in the train, Roquebrune-Marseille, 18 May

I wonder whether . . . No, I don't wonder anything. The whole world, and I to begin with, is merely a series of replies to questions that, all things considered, it is not really necessary, nor even very expedient, to ask. Since the question can only come too late.

Understanding is asking yourself a certain question to which what you understand becomes the very exact reply.

Of how many labyrinthine problems is not the most modest flower the natural solution? And the mysterious relationships of its form, its color, its scent? . . .

The necessity of writing this morning comes from the fact that yesterday I forgot my pen at Hardekopf's and have only a miserable little bit of pencil at hand.

I have often experienced the fact that my brain is never more lucid, more open, more joyful, and more alert than when, the night before, I have mortally overstrained my flesh.

Many roads lead to Rome. There is only one that leads to Christ,

THE WIDOW

"Oh, how becoming mourning is to you!" — Until then she had been seeking her position in life, her *raison d'être*. Sudden revelation of herself and of her vocation, by virtue of her *trial*. Wonderful subject. — To be developed in the *Nouveaux Caractères*.²⁵

16 June

At last I receive a few copies of the large-paper edition of my *Voyage au Congo*.²⁶ Very great satisfaction. The book is most success-

²⁵ For many years Gide had entertained the project of borrowing La Bruyère's title, just as La Bruyère had borrowed that of Theophrastus, and writing a series of reflections on people and morals. A few pages of these *New Characters* first appeared in 1925, since when such reflections have remained in the pages of the *Journals*.

²⁶ The de-luxe edition of *Travels in the Congo* was illustrated by numerous photographs by Marc Allégret.

fully turned out. I like the cover particularly and the half-title. The success of this volume is due above all to Malraux's zeal and good taste. The photographs seem to me for the most part excellent. I do not understand why my suggestions were not followed for their inseting and for the pagination of the table of contents? . . . My eye lights by chance on one of the notes, the quotation of a delightful sentence by La Fontaine. Naturally a typesetter indulged in a bit of zeal and thought he had to put back into the feminine "*le couleur de rose*," which I had nevertheless twice made clear.²⁷ *I beg the executors of my will to re-establish this in new editions* (and to re-establish likewise the epigraph of *Amyntas*, which has been allowed to drop out in the reprinting).

And "*soufre*" with two *f*s, which I had nevertheless corrected in the other edition.²⁸

18 June

Arrival at Cuverville the day before yesterday. Late spring suddenly unleashed; more heavily beflowered and leaved out and bushier than any spring I remember. Yesterday, under a sky fit for Eden, under the sun's caress, the unmown lawns, thickly penetrated with warmth, swollen by recent showers, filled with exquisite flowers, but not so beautiful as this light tangle of grasses, vaporous bath in which their reality is refined. . . . And the shadows of the avenue, the depth of the foliage. . . . Obsessed by the wonderful descriptions of equatorial forests I had just been reading in Tomlinson, I wonder if my admiration and devotion would have been any greater there. Perhaps I experience a little less than I used to do, in order to push my emotion to its height, the need of taking it out of its element.

I had promised myself to resume this notebook here, which I had forsaken two months ago. Since my return to Paris after stopping at Les Saintes-Maries (where Marc has made, I hope, a very good film) — and visit to Alibert (motor trip with him to La Galaube) — a very active life with a great deal to note down if I had had the time and the desire. I expected to turn back to it; but it is better to go ahead.

Yesterday's enchantment lasted only a few hours; this morning, on awaking, sea fog and, when it lifts, brutal light and excessive heat. The veil of grasses, so discreet yesterday, has become heavier. Wrote yesterday, while walking up and down the avenue, the first monologue of

²⁷ The sentence, from *Les Amours de Psyché* (*The Loves of Psyche*), describes the plumage of pelicans; Gide quotes it in a footnote to the first chapter of *Le Retour du Tchad*.

²⁸ *Soufre* means "sulphur," whereas *souffre* is a form of the verb "to suffer."

Cedipe, which I shall be perhaps obliged, eventually, to change completely.

Wasn't it the Archbishop of Rouen who said: "I need three hundred priests. . . . But I have five hundred too many?"

Through a great desire for conciliation, I wrote to M. A.²⁹ that I approved of his criticisms with regard to *L'École des femmes*, but they seem to me ridiculous, now that I reflect further about them, and seem to show above all a desire to free himself from me and to set up against my thought a thought that, for this reason, strikes him as more personal.

Twisting the famous aphorism, one must say: We are tired of granting you, in the name of our principles, a liberty that you refuse us in the name of yours.

Such works (cite them) reek of the comfort in which they were written, the table, the good armchair, the fire on the hearth. How much more deeply touched I am, on the contrary, by certain ones that reflect their author's material straits, everything that keeps one from writing too well!

"I must confess something . . . I hardly dare tell you: I am seventeen and still a virgin," a girl of the best English society said, blushing, to a feminine friend of Dorothy Bussy, who repeated these horrifying words to the latter. And Mme Bussy, who passes them on to me, adds that that girl, who is charming and in whom her family is particularly interested, having been accustomed to cocktails by the young men of her group, has just been declared to be suffering from the last degree of alcoholism, without any hope of cure.

I have just reread in a few days the two *Cedipuses*, *Antigone*, *The Seven before Thebes*, and *Prometheus*.

Antigone and *Prometheus* with the greatest admiration. It seems to me that nothing more beautiful has ever been written, in any literature. I reread at once to Em. the last two dramas, as we used to do when we were children.

In Marseille, while waiting for the train that was to take me to Manosque, I seek some trick of prestidigitation by which to preserve, in a French transposition, the accent and tempo of a line of Donne that is obsessing me:

Rob me, but bind me not and let me go.

²⁹ M. A. doubtless stands for Marcel Arland.

The literal translation producing nothing that is not rather flat, I first find:

*L'important c'est que je m'échappe,
Fût-ce tout nu d'entre tes mains,*

then prefer after all seven-syllable lines, more lively and fleeting:

*L'important c'est que j'échappe,
Fût-ce nu, d'entre tes mains.*

In which the surrender of the clothing is enough to indicate the preference for liberty in flight even to the embrace of love. I believe that nothing that was in the English is lost. Take anything you wish, but let me go. I think of those delightful lines of Verlaine:

*He told them: Oh, let me be!
Then, tenderly kissing all of them,
He escaped them most agilely,
Leaving them his mantle's hem,³⁰*

in which the cæsura hesitating in each line between the fifth and the sixth foot gives the second half-lines an extraordinary dash, yet sharing in the hesitation of the flight. One cannot do better. Besides, the whole poem: *Crimen amoris*, entirely in lines of eleven syllables, is one of the most peculiar and strangely perfect ones.

28 July

And constantly (nothing so absurd as) this thought: Not worth while settling in for the little time that is left me to live.

Big article by the L. brothers on *L'École des femmes*. Those "two imbeciles," as Charles-Louis Philippe used to call them, protest grandiloquently that I am wronging men of letters and that not all in France are as vile as I depicted my hero. I write them:

"My dear brothers,

"No, calm yourselves: it is not you that I portrayed in the hero of my *École des femmes*. And, moreover, where the devil did you get the idea that my Robert was a man of letters? Aside from the little letter at the beginning in which he announces the death of his mother, when do you see him writing? I specify that he wants to indulge in politics, at least so his fiancée believes, and that he assumes the political editorship of a literary review. . . . Let me add at once, to reassure you completely, that I do not at all claim that all politicians in France are like him. . . .

³⁰

*Il leur disait: O vous, laissez-moi tranquille!
Puis, les ayant baisés tous bien tendrement,
Il s'évada d'avec eux d'un geste agile,
Leur laissant aux mains des pans de vêtement.*

These lines are from the poem *Crimen amoris*.

"I have said somewhere: 'It is with fine sentiments that bad literature is made'; bad criticism also. But those sentiments honor you, and I remain most cordially yours. . . ."

I do not send the letter. That would be doing too much honor to those two fools.

Article by Crémieux on *Les Thibault*, in which he quotes this passage from *La Mort du père*³¹ (passage that I had already noticed, on which I stumbled):

" . . . One does not succeed in understanding a man until after his death. As long as a person is alive, all the things he might still accomplish, and which one cannot know, constitute unknowns that upset all computations. Death finally fixes the outlines. . . ."

Obviously. But, good heavens! those things he might still accomplish can remain unaccomplished; and it is a cruel error to believe them less important when they become, irremediably through death, those that he can no longer accomplish. Because one is forced to *cease taking them into account*, one can fancy one knows the dead man better, but the really loving soul cannot allow itself to be taken in; it knows that the undeveloped, the unrevealed elements of a person can remain much more important than what he succeeded (or what events authorized him) in bringing to completion.

Were it not for the war, how many poor fellows would themselves never have known their courage, and even those closest to them never have known that they had it in them to force one's admiration and appear as heroes.

At most that assertion is true for the novel. (That is to say that the art of the novel tends to make us take this lie for the truth.)

And yet what a wonderful novel could be written that would make us realize this is false!

That original Christian upbringing, irremediably, *detached* me from this world, inculcating in me, not so much a disgust for this earth, as rather a disbelief in its reality. I have known subsequently many converts who could not manage, despite the most constant effort, to maintain themselves in that position of the soul which had become natural to me and from which, subsequently, I made an effort to get away. I have never managed to take this life quite seriously; by no means because I have ever been able to believe (in so far as I remember) in eternal life (I mean in an after-life), but rather in another facet of this life which escapes our senses and of which we can have but a very

³¹ *The Father's Death* is Part VI of Roger Martin du Gard's long novel, *The World of the Thibaults*.

imperfect knowledge. . . . Indefinable impression of being "on tour" and of playing, in makeshift sets, with cardboard daggers.

Met Valéry the eve of my departure for Le Tertre; that is, Saturday, the last day of July (?). In the back of the *N.R.F.* shop he was auto-graphing some copies of the reprint of *Teste*.³² He took me by the arm and accompanied me to the corner of the rue de Bellechasse and the boulevard Saint-Germain. We even walked up and down in front of the Ministry of War until the stroke of twelve thirty reminded him that he was expected for lunch. More intelligent, more charming, more affectionate than ever. Yet I leave that meeting rather depressed, as from almost all other meetings with Valéry. But this time it is not so much feeling an intelligence so incomparably superior to mine attach no value to the commodities I can supply, accept only the coin of which I am most bereft; no, it was not that frightful feeling of insolvency (which used to drive me to despair), but a much more subtle feeling, a close relative of the one I tried to note yesterday. Valéry, on the contrary, is closely attached to life. He relates to me his conversations with Marshals Foch and Pétain; he always says exactly what is appropriate to say, which is always a bit more and a bit different from what one expects. He tells of Barthou's petty intrigues to take away from him the speech of welcome for Pétain, which Valéry is to pronounce, but which Barthou would be glad to pronounce in his place "if it just happened that it bored you or that you felt tired."³³ He is playing his life like a game of chess that it is important to win, and as he writes his poems, placing just the right word, as one moves up a pawn, in just the right place. He has managed his life so well that mine, in comparison, seems to me but a sorry succession of blunders. I remember that, still quite young, Valéry said to me: "If I wanted to be rich, it would be in order to be able, always and in any society or circumstance whatever, to wear the appropriate costume. . . ."

I show him the letter I have just written to Poincaré, in gratitude for his very kind letter thanking me for my *Voyage au Congo*. I just happened to be on my way to take the letter to the hospital in rue de la Chaise, where Poincaré has just been operated on; I therefore take it

³² The famous *Soirée avec M. Teste* (*An Evening with M. Teste*) appeared first in 1896 and, with the addition of seven other brief essays on the same subject, eventually became simply *Monsieur Teste*. The *N.R.F.* publishing house maintains a bookshop on the boulevard Raspail.

³³ When a new member is received into the French Academy he must make a formal speech, which is traditionally devoted to the career of the Immortal he is replacing; in reply to this an older member makes a speech of welcome in which he treats the career of the new member.

out of my pocket to show it to Valéry. He finds almost nothing in it that does not need to be changed, to be rewritten; almost nothing that is appropriate. And he is right. His remarks, his suggestions are excellent. As soon as I get home, rewriting my letter, I take them into account, very glad to have met him, but shocked to the bottom of my heart by the *inappropriateness* of my mind and all its manifestations.

Le Tertre, 11 August

In literature Catholicism offers also the immense advantage of authorizing a tone of assurance that, without it, the critic would never dare assume. Not only an assurance, but the right and the duty of manifesting it violently; doesn't he owe that assurance to his very faith? Faith, if only it is great (and faith owes it to itself to be great), demands, to manifest its ardor, judgments like verdicts; not summary perhaps, but absolute, in no way dubitative if not indubitable, handed down from as high as possible and seeming to fall from heaven. It is in the name of God that Catholic critics condemn; they cannot be mistaken, for God inspires them; any hesitation, any counterbalancing, any nuance even, becomes a sign of compromise and, consequently, of lukewarmness. In order not to be cast out by God, they cast us out. It is said of such critics that they have a great authority, or even, more absolutely, that they "have authority." As executioners, any weapon is acceptable to them, the more deeply wounding the better; and the condemned man hasn't the right to protest or to complain, for it is in the name of Truth that the judge speaks, the interpreter of God, who condemns not so much an author as the evil and error that that author manifests and propagates, as every bit of Satan that laughs in the work of his henchman.

Come, Charlie, in all good faith, what would you have thought of me and of that friendship for you that I profess if I had resorted in regard to you to that severity to which, in the name of God, you thought you had to resort toward me?

That year the two B. brothers were at Pontigny. One night (I had talked with the two of them at length, during the evening) I had a frightful nightmare: I dreamt that there were *three* of them. (The third was an equestrienne in a ballet skirt.) I woke up in a sweat.

Cuverville, 14 August

To what a degree habit dulls sensation. . . . It is enough, in order to be aware of this, to note the amazement caused in us by a familiar landscape unexpectedly turned about in a mirror.

Mystical ideas; I can slip into them as into old slippers; I feel at ease in them; but prefer to go barefoot.

Wonderful example of "*que*" used in the manner of the English "but":

"Though an angry God does not appear to men *but* with a dazzling pomp, still he is never more terrible than in the state in which I am to represent him: not, as one might think, borne on a flaming cloud from which shoot thunder and lightning, but armed with his blessings and seated on a throne of grace." (BOSSUET: *Sermon sur l'ardeur de la pénitence*.)³⁴

The things for which one would be willing to die. Page of *Les Nouvelles Nourritures*. Need of increasing joy.

I have perhaps done a few miserly things in my life; the important thing is having also done some generous and prodigal things; and I could not say of the two which were the more spontaneous (the latter probably), the more natural.

The rather narrow wish for a comfortable victory of "good" over "evil" has lamentably retarded the progress of humanity.

2 September

Back from Pontigny. Tropical heat. At the hospital where I go to see Eveline, I learn from Domi that Mme Soupault has just given birth in the next room. He dined the day before with Soupault. He expects to see him again this very evening. Quite amused by the combination of circumstances, I think of giving Domi a commission for Soupault, asking him to send to Dorothy Bussy a set of proofs of the book by me that he is publishing and of which she is impatiently awaiting the text to translate it.³⁵ Domi promises me, if he doesn't see Soupault this evening, to write him. It would be much simpler to write him myself. But this would be letting a call of fate go unanswered. The amusement I get from taking a sudden advantage of an odd combination of circumstances has made me lose many a game of chess. I cannot resist the appeal of a risky move; attraction of the unexpected, which, in some very rare cases, can lead to the most fecund discoveries. Annex to the psychology of the gambler.

³⁴ *Sermon on the Ardor of Penance*.

³⁵ Philippe Soupault, then associated with the house of Éditions Simon Kra, was bringing out Gide's *Un Esprit non prévenu* (*An Unprejudiced Mind*), which was completely printed by 8 September 1929. Domi is Domnique Drouin, André Gide's nephew.

Paris, 26 September

Such reflections (as the last), which are perhaps not very correct or, in any case, would require being less abruptly expressed, being somewhat supported, explained, excused so to speak — are not at all in their place in this notebook. Writing in it very rarely, I feel that I should put into it only important things. If I wrote in it every day, I should dare to write anything whatever, as I ought to. What is to be included here is precisely what is too slight to have been retained by the sieve of any literary work. I must set down here, and without any affectation whatever, mere trifles.

.

Passing in front of the Deux Magots café, I let myself be snatched by Jean Prévost. What pleasure can he find in my company? Solely, I believe, that of feeling more himself than ever when opposing himself to me with all his health, with all his memory, with his entire and unmitigated hates, and with his childish violence, which is becoming less and less amusing since he has ceased to be a child.

I read a few pages of Pater's essay on Wordsworth, very good ones, to be sure, but which I like less than those in which he speaks of the Renaissance or of Greece, and which interest me above all because I feel in them what must please Charles Du Bos, who is always seeking in his readings what can most flatter him and encourage him to indulge in subtleties, to be most entirely of his own opinion.

26, in the evening

Dictated some belated replies; put some order into my papers. I am alone in the apartment, which is terribly dusty; all the furniture is covered with dust-sheets, put on by the housekeeper before setting out for a two-month vacation. At ten o'clock I receive Mme Peignot, who comes to have a look at the sixth-floor room that I am turning over to her for her young unknown protégée, who is not to come until the 10th of October. I have time to arrange the tiny room a little more comfortably and to have some plugs put in for an electric lamp. At eleven o'clock I go to the *N.R.F.* to send out the books promised, then to the Bon Marché, where Le Grix comes to pick me up for lunch.³⁶ When he is put at ease and lets himself go, Le Grix completely loses that suggestion of the sacristy which makes him utterly unattractive to some. Most often we form of one another only hasty and superficial judgments. One does not really appreciate someone until one has first put him at ease. Long and very intimate conversation. Le Grix returns with me to rue Vaneau, where he reads *La Suite de l'École des femmes*;

³⁶ The Bon Marché is a large department store on the left bank of the Seine.

which I offer him for his review.³⁷ At three thirty the Princess de Basciano's motor comes to pick me up and take me, together with Alix Guillain, Groethuysen, and Prince Mirsky, to Versailles, where I spend the rest of the day. I talk with much greater facility than ordinarily, feeling that I am being listened to with affectionate interest.

27 September

Reread, before giving them to be typed, some notebooks of my prewar journal. What interests me most in them today is finding, over so long a period of time and so late, moral constraint and effort. How long I had to struggle! What dull steppes I have crossed!

I have rather well (and very happily) noted down certain conversations with Claudel. I send a copy of them to Groethuysen, with whom, just yesterday, I spoke at great length about Claudel. The latter is going to found and edit a review, it appears: a Thomist and orthodox review, which will print only the purest representatives of Catholic literature of today. There will remain, for the *N.R.F.*, only the free-thinking elements. After which people will be surprised that it seems tententious! . . .

I felt extraordinarily well yesterday, cheerful, and fit for work. Had forgotten my age. This is just what I had gone to the baths for.

But I let myself slip into smoking too much.

The ugliness, the vulgarity of the people in the métro covers me with gloom. Oh, to go back among the Negroes! . . .

Hardly did a thing all day worth mentioning.³⁸ Sat dazed before the pile of copies of *Un Esprit non prévenu*,³⁹ which I received four days ago already and which I ought to send out. Courage fails me in the face of the dedications to write.

28 September

I am waiting for P., who was to come and pick me up in an auto at eight o'clock; a telephone call from Marc, whom we are going to join in Brussels, loads her down with errands that will delay us considerably. The weather is splendid.

³⁷ André Gide had by now moved to an apartment on the rue Vaneau. *The Continuation of the School for Wives* was entitled, by the time it was published, simply *Robert*. François Le Grix was editor of *La Revue hebdomadaire*.

³⁸ The last two words appear in English in the original.

³⁹ *An Unprejudiced Mind* is a collection of reflections on art, religion, and life, many taken from the *Journals*, which Éditions Kra published in September 1929.

Brussels, 8 p.m.

Did not leave until nine thirty. Lunched I don't know just where, beyond Compiègne, very well and pleasantly. I should like, some day, to describe the Paris "zone," in my way, which would not be at all that of Huysmans; rather that of Rilke; and even more my own.⁴⁰ *Exotic* aspect of that poverty. A few days ago, coming out of Kra's, where *Un Esprit non prévenu* has just been published, I had climbed up to the Sacré-Cœur, where I hadn't been in more than twenty years (?), and had tarried for some time in the sordid alleyways round about; almost too picturesque for my taste.

Through the regions devastated by the war. Still a few ruins among the new houses. With the sole exception of the village of Roupî, near Saint-Quentin, all the new constructions are hideous. What a wonderful opportunity, however, to build a whole town at one time according to an intelligently conceived plan! What they would have done in Germany. . . .

We go a bit out of our way to see the housing project built for the Sommier factory. A pity that these very attractive houses are set in such an unlovely landscape! Had tea at Mons. Arrived in Brussels at six thirty, just as we had expected. Stopped at the Hotel Terminus, where Marc had reserved two rooms for us. He has been working for a fortnight on a film ordered by the Belgian State Railways; still has about ten days more. I am writing all this in my hotel room, while waiting for him to finish his bookkeeping and pay off his supers, as he used to pay our bearers in the Congo — through discipline, for all this offers no interest at all.

Read on the way *Arsène Guillot*,⁴¹ the second part of which at least is excellent, but it presents hardly any other interest than that of a very well-played game of chess. In all our literature love plays a rather conventional role. Well, yes! Max loves Mme de Piennes; she loves Max without being willing to admit it to herself. . . . So what? The only thing that interests us is the manner in which the gradual discovery of the sentiments is developed (just as in Marivaux, moreover). Nothing in it concerns the person himself, but merely the relationships between people. What I should like to know is whether, after it is all over, Mme de Piennes is less devout, whether Max is more so. . . . But this does not interest Mérimée at all. It's a pity! Mme de Piennes's religious feelings have no more real existence and are no more particularized than the "confidants" of our classical drama, whose role they somewhat assume. They are there only to allow us to gauge the sentiments of love to which they are opposed, or are supposed to be opposed. They are

⁴⁰ The undeveloped area just outside Paris, squalidly inhabited by poverty-stricken squatters, is called the "zone."

⁴¹ A short story by Mérimée.

depicted with an elegant skepticism, so discreet that it hides itself, but smilingly. The preacher, at least, believes in carnal desires, in human love, in the blandishments of all the passions he condemns and which he wants to teach us to overcome. It goes without saying that, in Mérimée's mind, religious sentiments are bound to be defeated; as soon as human love appears, they withdraw; this is the triumph of the real over the fanciful. And if, perhaps, in some other tale, religious sentiments won out over profane sentiments, this would be with a certain reverse contrition that would present that very victory to us as a lamentable defeat. It never occurs to him for a moment that *this* can appear (and is) still more important than *that*, even from the artistic point of view he takes, nor that the artist himself can be religious too. That art which lays claim to none but a sentimental depth remains deplorably limited. The intolerable "Madame" to whom he addresses himself lends to this whole tale a note of society affectation, which Mérimée managed sometimes, and very happily, to do without. But that affectation, which I find in Marivaux too, is a failing into which the unbelievers among the "analysts of the heart" readily fall. The great Stendhal managed to avoid it.

29 September

Read yesterday to P. the *Suite de l'École des femmes*, which I have just finished. Rather good impression. Scarcely anything to change, I believe, that I cannot correct in the proofs. I wrote this little book in less than eight days with the greatest ease; this is the way it had to be written. I should like to be able to dictate the story of *La Séquestrée de Poitiers*⁴² in twelve days at Cuverville. Martin-Chauffier must have prepared the documents furnished by Chanvin and Jean-Paul Allégret. I return to Paris the day after tomorrow to pick them up.

Brussels, 30 September

Yesterday, visit to the Museum. One of the museums with which I am most familiar. But they have transferred a number of canvases into the Modern Museum (David, Goya, etc.). Changed certain attributions: a sketch by Tintoretto is "restored" to El Greco. *The Goldsmith's Family*, first attributed to Govaert Flinck, then to Biset, is now simply "Flemish School"; they have, alas! hung it up high; one can no longer see it very well and, consequently, it seems less good; only with the help of my memory can I recover what I liked in it, which I believe I spoke of some time ago.⁴³ One's attention has to be especially called to that painting to notice everything remarkable about it. Huysmans was particularly qualified to make the most of the children's

⁴² *The Poitiers Incarceration Case*, a true story.

⁴³ See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 13.

sickly expression, the eyes without lashes, the pallor of the faces which seem always to have been sheltered from the sun. Strange work, which I like not only for its pictorial qualities, though they are very gripping for anyone who deigns to look at it attentively. A certain unevenness of technique between the faces and the still-life parts. . . .

The Van der Weydens seem to me more wonderful than ever.

Charles Du Bos's great reluctance to use the words *romantic* and *classical* seems suddenly clear to me upon reading the postscriptum by his revered master Walter Pater (to *Appreciations*). For does not Pater see in Murger one of the most perfect representatives of French romanticism?

However good (though too subtle) may be the study of Wordsworth, I prefer and am more interested in the one on Coleridge.

Paris, 3 October

Yesterday, back from Brussels by motor. Dreadful weather. I read almost without interruption. *Dusty Answer* by Rosamund Lehmann strikes me as much better than *Daphne Adeane*; ⁴⁴ but yet I don't know whether I shall go on to the end. How easy it would have been for me to get the approval of the majority by writing *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* in the accepted fashion of novels, describing persons and places, analyzing emotions, explaining situations, spreading out on the surface everything I hide between the lines, and protecting the reader's sloth!

Went to meet Curtius at the Hôtel Foyot; he is with an unknown lady, whom he does not introduce to me. I take the two of them to the Grill-Room on the Place Médicis. *Foie gras*, creamed mushrooms, heady wines, many cigarettes. On getting home (I had not yet taken time to stop off at rue Vaneau), I find a copious mail and have not the good sense to put off reading it until the next day. Awful night; well deserved. Curtius more delightful than ever.

Impossible to find in my library the books for which I have the most urgent need.

Certain days (today, for instance) life has such a bad taste that one would like to be able to spit it out.

6 October

Quickly a few lines before going to bed and solely in order not to let go; and because tomorrow, leaving for Cuverville, I shall not find a moment.

⁴⁴ A novel by Maurice Baring.

Back to the piano for the last four days. Returned to the third and fifth *Barcarolles* of Fauré. Fugue in A major (first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavichord*).

Long visit from Green the day before yesterday; I introduce him to Curtius, come to take tea. Green stays after him, talks to me about his next book, which he wants to be quite different from the preceding ones, and for which he is inaugurating an entirely new method of work. I let myself be led into reading him almost all I have written of *Cedipe* through a desire to show him my confidence and through a need to try out my sentences on a mind so different from mine. I do not believe he is very sensitive to qualities of style; but it just happens to be something else that I am aiming for. I let myself be led into reading him likewise some already old pages on mythology, and am angry with myself afterward, fearing to have tired him. These pages seemed to me overwritten and lacking in spontaneity. I do not think he could have liked them; and, as a result, I ceased to like them myself.

7 October

Exhausted by a very bad night. The fate of X. and of Y., which is at stake, torments me so that I cannot get more than four hours' sleep. I have very serious conversations with one and then with the other; do not know what to fear, what to wish for. . . .

I cannot write in this notebook anything of what is most dear to me; thus it is that not a trace will be found here of the Constantinople adventure, which, during the last three months, has so filled my mind and which I am not yet willing to believe closed. I think of it every day and never pass in front of the concierge's door without looking anxiously to see if perhaps at last a letter . . . I cannot believe that Émile D. will accept being forbidden to write me. . . . It is better to say nothing of it than to say too little.

Cuverville, 8 October

It is certain that I change my opinions with a facility that disconcerts even me. P., with whom I dined yesterday, told us (Marc and me) what ready ground anxiety found in her, and her disposition to imagine the worst at once, as soon as, for instance, Marc left her without news or the auto that was to bring little Michel back to her was late. I too, I told her, I always imagine the worst; but quite calmly. Not a day goes by without my imagining my death and that of all my friends. And, for example: every night when I used to return alone to Auteuil, I expected to find the Villa burned down or robbed, an assassin behind the door, which I nevertheless would open without trembling; none of all this (which on certain evenings, however, I visualized with an impressive preciseness) managed to get any real

anguish out of me. In my childhood I was subject to frequent nightmares, which left me terrorized; I used to wake up screaming or in tears and would be afraid to go back to sleep. At a certain age, around sixteen, I don't know just what happened . . . the anguish left me. I would sometimes happen to dream the same things; yes, the very ones that a short time before would have filled me with terror; but interest and curiosity took the place of the fear, horror, or distress of the past.

It is the same today; gray, leaden, dark feelings are the ones I find hardest to produce; I am almost inclined to say they are trumped up and that I feel them only because of telling myself that I ought to feel them. Most likely this derives in part from the fact that I no longer authentically value anything much, anything at all, since I lost what I most valued. (But this is true only of the last twelve years.)

How can it be that I am not more saddened by little Émile D.'s sudden silence, even though not an hour passes without my thinking of it? It is partly because I am not willing to yield to sadness, for I see in that very surrender a sort of self-indulgence that I deplore, against which I protest and balk just as, when very young, I did against the state of sin. A certain element of resolve enters into this, to be sure, but the state of joy (which I should like always to maintain in me) is the most natural to me and also the state in which I am most happily stretched to my fullest capacity, in which I feel that I am at my best. If I do not succeed in achieving it, the reason is almost always physical.

I should nevertheless like to be sure that the little fellow did not kill himself. In the state of exaltation he had reached he was capable of doing so if he suddenly met a blind, absurd opposition from his parents, who, in case he should kill himself, after being driven to despair by them, would certainly consider me responsible for that death . . . just as they already considered me responsible for everything that upset them, for everything they did not understand in their child, for everything in him that escaped them and in which they could no longer recognize themselves. They were terrified to see their son "become too fond of me." Even if he were, as the mother wrote me, "in distress," no one was more capable of understanding him, of holding out a helping hand, of saving him . . . than I. But Metaneira reappears in almost every mother, just as in this case Ceres relives in me.⁴⁵

9 October

"You say you *believe*" (said Count de X., an extreme Catholic, to the good Protestant minister). "You people believe, but we *know*."

⁴⁵ Ceres or Demeter horrified Metaneira by holding the latter's child in the fire to purge away its mortality and make it immortal.

10 October

An American magazine article (very bad and as malicious as can be, not so much against me as against France) leads me to reflect on the amusement there might be in not bringing out too early the doubtful or annoying sides of Robert's character, in letting the reader share for a time Éveline's feelings toward him. But this would have forced me to lengthen it out considerably, to bring in nuances, to be subtle, etc. . . .⁴⁶

I thought of all this before beginning to write this book (and of still many other possibilities), then clung to what seemed to me the best.

11 October

The central heating system is not going yet; I am shivering and must have caught cold yesterday; and already in Cuverville. I am using for the first time the fireplace in the little room beside my room; there I dictate to Mlle Zaglad the first chapter of *La Séquestrée de Poitiers*, after having first got rid of several tiresome letters. Requests from bores become more numerous every month. What good collective replies I might have given in that little personal review, which I would have written and edited quite alone and which I was a fool not to launch, as I had made up my mind to do, on my return from the Congo. But, as always, I had questioned my strength, just as I refuse lectures for fear of having no voice; besides, I was also afraid of feeling dreadfully absorbed by it and that my regret for having got into it might be much worse than the regret I might have for staying out of it; but I don't know. . . . I could have published in it, in installments, my travel diary, news-items, criticisms, and real or imaginary letters from me or to me. Eventually, after a few months, I might have allowed others to write for it. . . .

Received Pepys's *Diary* this evening, in three volumes of more than a thousand pages each. Oh, if only tiresome solicitors would leave me alone! . . . Yet I enjoy seeing Jean Loisy again before dinner; then young Robert Levesque, whom I decidedly like. But what a delight, after he had left me, to go back to the organ fugue (the second one in C major, arranged by Liszt), interrupted by Loisy's unexpected arrival!

If only I could hear myself again at a distance! My former manner of playing, as I recall it, seems to me thin by comparison; that is, today I have both more force and more softness.

⁴⁶ Gide is referring to his tale *The School for Wives*.

Worn out by this absurd cold. Very good piano-practice. Dictated *La Séquestrée de Poitiers*, which causes me a lot of trouble despite Martin-Chauffier's preparatory work (which, after all, I could have done without), since an exaggerated conscientiousness forces me to look up the texts themselves and in his copy I discover slight omissions, doubtless intentional but which I cannot always approve.

Nine hundred sheets of the English and American edition of my *Montaigne* to sign! ⁴⁷ . . . Read Cocteau's *Le Livre blanc*, lent by Roland Saucier, until I receive the copy promised by Cocteau.⁴⁸ What empty agitation in the tales he relates! What affectation in his style! What a play to the gallery in the poses he strikes! . . . What artifice! . . . Yet certain obscenities are related in a charming way. What is shocking, and greatly so, is the pseudo-religious sophistries.

12 October

What is he doing? Where is he? Is he thinking of me? Is he telling himself perhaps that I am forgetting him? . . . This constant interrogation plays a muffled accompaniment to all my thoughts.

13 October

Sweating, puffing, exhausted, and exasperated by my cold. Incapable of a sustained effort. I am waiting for it to get over, but know that I am in for a fortnight more of it.

Mme Théo is to return this evening. Everything tires and bores me. With that youngster has left me all the youth that remained to me.

15 October

The feelings I noted down the last few days strike me as exaggerated to the very edge of insincerity. It is true that the thought of that child concerns me greatly and that at every moment of the day I feel it breaking through . . . but without any great sorrow. I cannot say either that I am resigned to this silence; but *what* is always seems to me *what had to be*; the dominant feature of my character is perhaps an extraordinary, untranslatable "buoyancy."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Montaigne, an Essay in Two Parts* by André Gide was published in London by the Blackamore Press in 1929 in a translation by Stephen H. Guest and Trevor E. Blewitt. The two separate essays had first appeared in France in reviews, the first in *Commerce* in 1928 and the second in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in June 1929.

⁴⁸ *The White Book* was a luxurious folio volume issued by Éditions du Cygne in early 1930. It recounted the homosexual experiences of the anonymous author, for, though Cocteau illustrated the book, he claimed not to have written it.

⁴⁹ This last word appears in English.

17 October

Went to have my throat thermo-cauterized by Luc Durtain. Lunch at Mme Théo's with Jean Schlumberger, to whom I had read, the evening before, my *Suite à l'École des femmes*. He, and Mme Théo likewise, made some very sensible remarks that I shall have to take into account. Day particularly broken up by unwelcome visitors. Received a visit from Crès about the reprinting of *André Walter*; ⁵⁰ from J., who begs me to come and see his new home; from young C., whom I had met in Algiers (very likable and charming, but entangled in a lot of insoluble and vital problems . . .), etc. Go to the Review, where I find Benda, Malraux, and Groethuysen with Paulhan.⁵¹ Corrected in a hurry the proofs of Pierre Louÿs's letters, which are to appear in the November issue, and those of the supplement to *L'École des femmes*.

As I pass the concierge's door he gives me a letter from Émile. At last! I cannot read it at once, but keep on fingering it in my pocket until the blow it contains strikes my heart. Certainly he had no idea how cruel his letter would be to me. The abominable calumnies he has been told about me have touched him and since he believes, according to what he has been told, that I am a two-faced, heartless person, he has no fear of hurting me. He is in Paris; went by near the rue Vaneau a few days ago, almost came up to see me; congratulates himself on not having done so; tells me at one and the same time that he still loves me and has made up his mind not to love me any more. He talks as if all the feeling were on his side. Finally he asks me to make no attempt to reach him, to forget him as he is going to forget me; and, to be sure of my silence, he refuses to give me his address.

To pull myself together I read Massis's two scathing articles in the *Revue universelle*. They are entitled "The Bankruptcy of André Gide" and are inspired by the book by Du Bos, who has so masterfully and pertinently distinguished and exposed in his former friend a case of "generalized inversion." Etc., etc.

It seems to me that in the whole affair of little Émile I let myself be taken in most absurdly. This is just because I was unwilling to look upon it as a game (which is the surest means of all of letting oneself be taken in) — and this is why it is all so painful to me today. We should be half cured of a love-affair if we could convince ourself that

⁵⁰ André Gide's first two works, *The Notebooks of André Walter* and *The Poems of André Walter*, which had both appeared anonymously in 1891 and 1892 respectively, were reissued together for the first time in 1930 by Éditions des Œuvres Représentatives under the direction of George Célestin Crès.

⁵¹ Jean Paulhan was by now editor-in-chief of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.

the person with whom we are in love is, after all, but a rather ordinary creature. The strength of the attachment comes from the gnawing conviction that there is something exceptional, unique, irreplaceable in the beloved, which we shall never again find.

20 October

Exasperation at not being able to do a thing *uninterruptedly*; and I am more and more convinced that nothing good is achieved without a long perseverance, without applying one's effort for some time in the same direction. It is a matter of patient selection, analogous to that exercised by good horticulturists.

Here everything distracts me (yet very little), interrupts and breaks up my effort, checks my impetus. I can refuse myself to society people, to interviewers, to that category of unwelcome visitors who come to us through vanity or snobbery, but not to those who really come to ask a service of me: A.'s wife and her three children who are homeless; M. T., who wants me to recommend her to P., where she thinks she will find a job; Mme L., who claims to be libeled by J.'s latest book and brings me a whole folder of letters and testimonials that I am to examine in order to help her rehabilitate her husband; B., the government functionary in French West Africa, who has apparently been done a frightful injustice . . . etc., etc. Every day some new undertaking. What would it be if I didn't have the reputation of being disobliging, avaricious, and quarrelsome!

Those long hours on foot or carried in a chair through a monotonous landscape where nothing interrupted my thought, isn't that what I especially liked about the trip to the Congo, what I most long for?

The business of *La Séquestrée de Poitiers*, which in the calm of Cuverville I could have finished up in a week, is causing me great trouble since I cannot work on it with sufficient continuity. And, this way, work is much more tiring. It is not the work that is tiring, but the breaking of my thought.

Yesterday, after a visit from Martin-Chauffier, who will take on the editing of the collection I am entitling *Ne jugez pas*,⁵² went to ask for news of J. Valéry, whom I had left rather ill last Wednesday. Paul was there, suffering from a serious cold but as charming as ever. Went to dine immediately afterward at the Drouins'.

And I am pained to think that I have not yet been to see my Uncle Charles Gide, nor the Laurenses, nor the A. family, etc., etc.,

And I ought to go, as soon as possible, to Germany in order to go over with Curtius the translation of the *Nourritures*, which V. and S. tell me is dreadful.

⁵² The collection *Judge Not* includes *The Poitiers Incarceration Case* and *The Redureau Case*.

And I should like so much not to give up my piano-practice (Fugues in C major and in A major from the first volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavichord*, Chopin's Prelude in F-sharp minor).

I should like so much to continue keeping this notebook up to date. Too busy the last few days, I was unable to note down an important conversation with Copeau, with whom I had dinner the day before yesterday; with Schlumberger, who was leaving for Braffy (oh, how I envy him his solitude!); with young Dombrowski, whom I should so much like to help secure a position in French Equatorial Africa.

Everything flows irretrievably into the past.

There are certain days on which one feels oneself particularly *wide of the mark*; behindhand; in debt; showing a deficit.

Today I see nothing but deficiencies everywhere; what I lack; where I fell short. . . .

Take refuge in sleep.

21 October

In the same issue as the second diatribe by Massis, Barrès's *Carnets* disappoint me; but I had read with the greatest interest his *Mémoires* in *La Revue des deux mondes*. It is impossible to display more ingenuously one's weaknesses and appetite for grandeur. The kind of fame he longs for . . . the kind for which I have the least taste. There are few figures that remain more foreign to me. Yet there is one point at which we touch: his desire, his need of nobility. But I add that he seems to be attracted especially by what, to my way of thinking, is merely the simulacrum.

What would he have been if he had not known his origins? Much greater, doubtless. I imagine him a foundling. Would he have discovered and loved *his* Lorraine? ⁵³

How can Massis put up with that love of Asia?

Yesterday took Mme Théo to the movies. Bancroft in a very ordinary film; he rather good himself; a very beautiful actress; the other actors disagreeable and constantly *acting*. Nothing to note down.

Returned home in haste; wrote a preface for the collection *Ne jugez pas*.

In the evening read a few pages of La Bruyère, which washed me of all the agitations, the torments, the petty and empty contortions of this day.

⁵³ The basis of Maurice Barrès's nationalism was his love for his native province, Lorraine, to which he was attached by the graves of his ancestors, his traditions, and his upbringing.

The love of truth is not the need of certainty and it is very unwise to confuse one with the other.

One can love the truth all the more while not believing it ever possible to reach an absolute toward which nevertheless that fragmentary truth leads us.

I have often been in a position to observe that certain religious minds, and notably the Catholics, are less inclined to pay attention to that partial truth (the only one, however, that we can ever seize) the more they think themselves in possession of a superior Truth to which the whole tangible world and whatever knowledge we can have of it are subordinate. And this is very easily understandable. He who believes the bolt hurled by a God does not observe the lightning; nor the germination of a seed, nor the metamorphosis of an insect, if he is satisfied to recognize in all these natural phenomena a constant miracle and mere obedience to a continuous divine intervention. Likewise he who thinks he is in possession of a dogmatic truth will consider to be in error all those for whom the dogma does not furnish a sufficient reply to their interrogations. All knowledge has as starting-point a skepticism, against which faith stands opposed.

22 October

Ghéon's book seems to me made up of the devotion of a simpleton and an art more rudimentary than unaffected . . . but he has just written in *Latinité* an article on Ducoté and the role played by his *Ermitage* which is full of intelligence, ponderation, tact, and sympathy; and which makes me think sadly of the gesture of gratitude and piety that I could have, and should have, made — and which I did not make.⁵⁴

But how difficult it is for me to be timely! All my thoughts, all my feelings, all my acts come too late or too early, and I feel always and everywhere *unseasonable*.

I remember my surprise when Ducoté asked me to open the first issue of that new *Ermitage* of which he had assumed the editorship. I do not think that anything, in my whole career, ever flattered me more, for Ducoté did not yet know me. I was on my wedding-trip in the Engadine; I received his letter at Saint-Moritz. I was working on my *Nourritures terrestres*. It was Ménalque's tale (from that work) that I sent him at once. It would have been hard for me today to write an article on Ducoté without relating all this and without talking a bit too much of myself. I tell myself this as a sort of excuse; but it scarcely convinces me and does not console me much.

⁵⁴ Édouard Ducoté, who edited the monthly *Ermitage* from 1897 until 1906 with the collaboration of Gide, Gourmont, Copeau, Ghéon, Claudel, Vielé-Griffin, etc., had just died.

23 October

I knew someone who was plunged into black melancholy at the mere thought of having to replace, soon and from time to time, the pair of shoes he was wearing; and likewise his clothing, his hat, his linen, his necktie. This was not an evidence of avarice, but a sort of anguish at not being able to rely on anything durable, definitive, anything *absolute*.

25 October

Few things annoy me more than seeing famous remarks repeated awkwardly.

In today's *Nouvelles littéraires* I encounter a remark of Barbey d'Aurevilly that Jules Lemaître had quoted years ago in one of his "Morning Notes" in *Le Temps*. I recall it well enough to be able to guarantee its exactitude.

"My word, Monsieur d'Aurevilly," Jules Lemaître said to him as he met him in the avenue des Champs-Élysées, "that is certainly a wonderfully fitted frock-coat!"

Whereupon d'Aurevilly let drop in his lofty manner this simple and marvelous little sentence:

"Were I to take communion, I should burst."

Now this is what becomes of this charming remark under the pen of M. Nicolas Ségur:

"Sir, it would be enough for me to take communion to burst utterly."

Such remarks, often so typical, which Heredia was ever ready to quote, I fear that they may be deformed or lost if everyone were as lazy as I about noting them down. Let me quickly quote this other one, in which Aurevilly relives completely:

This takes place rue Royale. It is very late. No one left in the streets; Aurevilly, who this evening has drunk a quantity of local white wine together with his friend X., is relieving himself. A gendarme passes by: "At least, sir, you might get a little closer to the wall." For Barbey has not abandoned his customary aloofness. Thereupon he turns round and:

"Would you want me to skin myself?"⁵⁵

28 October

In bed since Friday evening. A sort of colonial diarrhea; that is, bleeding. Starvation diet. A few griping pains, but bearable after all. Impression of a crossing (with possible shipwreck), having broken off all connections with the outer world, or at least with society. An excellent excuse for refusing invitations and failing to receive any but a few

⁵⁵ The use of the imperfect subjunctive makes this even better in the original: "*Voudriez-vous que je m'écorchasse?*"

intimate friends. No worry about going out even to get my meals. A very long and unbroken succession of hours, of undifferentiated hours. I hardly dare confess how delighted I am, for fear of seeming affected. The conventional is the only thing that never looks like "pose." I shall finally be able to finish *Der Zauberberg*! ⁵⁶

But before getting back to it; for I am still a bit too weak for that effort (in two days I have lost almost a quart of blood and eaten nothing since Friday morning), I am reading *Maxime* by Duvernois — much less good than *Edgar* and a few others — then launch into *Le Soulier de satin*.⁵⁷

Yesterday visit from Valéry. He repeats to me the fact that, for many years now, he has written only on order and urged on by a need for money.

"That is to say that, for some time, you have written nothing for your own pleasure?"

"For my own pleasure?!" he continues. "But my pleasure consists precisely in writing *nothing*. I should have done something other than writing, for my own pleasure. No, no; I have never written anything, and I never write anything, save under compulsion, forced to, and cursing against it."

He tells me with admiration (or at least with an astonishment full of consideration) about Dr. de Martel, who has just saved his wife; about the tremendous amount of work that he succeeds in getting through every day and about the sort of pleasure, of intoxication even, that he can get from a successful operation and even from the mere fact of operating.

"It is also the intoxication of abnegation," I say. At this word *abnegation* Valéry pricks up his ears, leaps very amusingly from his chair to my bedside, runs to the hall door, and, leaning out, shouts:

"Bring some ice! Boy, bring some ice! The patient is raving. . . . He is 'abnegating'!"

At many a point in the conversation I am aware that he thinks me quite entangled in pietism and sentimentality.

29 October

"I have never been able to invent anything." It is by means of such a sentence in the *Journal d'Édouard* ⁵⁸ that I thought to separate myself from Édouard, to distinguish him. . . . And it is this sentence on the

⁵⁶ Thomas Mann's novel, *The Magic Mountain*, first appeared in German in 1924.

⁵⁷ *The Satin Slipper* is a long drama in verse by Paul Claudel laid in Renaissance Spain and first published in 1929.

⁵⁸ The "Journal of Édouard" is a part of *The Counterfeiters*, being the diary kept by the novelist character who stands at the center of the action.

contrary that is used to prove that, "incapable of invention," I have depicted myself in Édouard and that I am not a novelist.

30 October

C.'s recordings: the Preludes of Chopin.

Sensuality lacking; grace and sentimentality take its place.

Consternation. I defy anyone who did not already know the exquisite heart of these preludes to discover any of it in this playing (with a few exceptions).

I had just listened to them when Charlie Du Bos arrived, told of my illness by the good Curtius, who had come to see me this morning. Was weak enough to speak of these records to Charlie (who pretends to enjoy music and perhaps fancies he *feels* it, but who is touched by music only through literature) — and since I happened to be very weak, having eaten nothing in five days, and was no longer master of myself, I absurdly, vainly, and unbelievably exaggerated the superior quality of my playing over that of C.

Yet it was not vanity that urged me to speak thus, but rather my exasperation at thinking that anyone might think he knows, that he can judge, pretend to love Chopin, according to *that*.

At least I might have explained calmly, in Charlie's own way, just how Chopin seemed to me to be betrayed (as I should like at least to write it down); but I allowed myself to be carried away; I spoke vehemently, like someone replying to an attack, and seemed simply to be bursting with pride.

The ugly image that Charlie has of me henceforth acts upon me like a magnet, for I feel it in his mind opposite me attracting me and forcing me to *verify* it (yes, this is really the precise word, only slightly deflected from its meaning to return at once to its true meaning). I very much fear never again being able to be natural with him.

Mlle Zaglad came to bring me the typescript of the letter I was going to send him; a rather important letter in reply to an equally important one from him, and I am keeping a copy of it elsewhere.

Finished *Le Soulier de satin*. Staggering. It is hard to imagine that in another religion Claudel's shortcomings could have developed as unimpeded as in Catholicism. What a warning! And yet:

I am in no way inclined to consider myself better than Claudel, and for certain aspects of his character I maintain a great esteem. But I note with curiosity that not one of my shortcomings would find encouragement in Catholicism; quite the contrary, only my good qualities would, and doubtless the best ones (or so it seems to me this evening) — so that from the effect of Catholicism on Claudel I am quite unable to deduce the effect Catholicism would have on me.

31 October

Once more (and, as always in this case, I tell myself that it is perhaps the last time), I have known the last few days, and particularly yesterday, minutes and hours of calm happiness.

And even last night the abundance of my thought and the interest, expectation, and joy filled me, swelled me to the point of preventing sleep. Eventually yielding to the call, I went back to reading and writing with delight.

Again I experienced the fact that my happiness was great in proportion as my liberty was reduced.

2 November

Yes, my brain, as if it had had its carbon removed by this fast, is functioning with extraordinary alacrity. But yesterday, a very tiring day devoted entirely to going over the translation of the *Nourritures* with Groethuysen, Alix Guillaïn, and Mme Théo. That translation which Prinzhorn insisted on making is not so bad as V., L., and Jean Schlumberger had led me to believe, and we decide that it is better to try to improve it than to reject it as my other friends had urged me to do.

Groethuysen and Alix Guillaïn, inexhaustibly obliging, have agreed to spend as much time on it with me as is necessary. They therefore came to lunch at about one o'clock and did not leave until about eleven in the evening. We revised the second book. They are to return tomorrow for lunch and dinner again. Nothing is more amusing, charming, and profitable than to work with such open and supple minds.

Curtius came at tea-time. I doubt if he gets along very well with Groethuysen, but I enjoy both of them almost equally. I was too aware of Groethuysen's intelligence to be completely at ease with him in the past, but the warmth of his affection and his kindness restore him to a very comfortable merely human level.

This morning managed to dictate to Mlle Zaglad some reflections on Chopin and C.'s interpretation that I have been carrying in me for five days now.

4 November

A long interview with L. in *L'Opinion*. The great number of factual errors that punctuate it will, I hope, throw some discredit on the remarks he attributes to me.⁵⁹

He makes me say many absurdities; but, above all, the tone is wrong. When one is oneself a man of letters and journalist, it is doubt-

⁵⁹ This interview with André Lang was subsequently republished in Lang's book *Tiers de siècle (Third of a Century)*. See below, p. 152.

less very hard not to attribute the soul of a man of letters and journalist to all who write and whom one hastens to interview.

I thought I "had to" grant that interview; it would have been better to have refused, as I had always done before.

Today went out for the first time. I cross the Tuileries gardens to buy a Browning at Galignani's, having been tormented for several days by a great (and very ill-timed) desire to translate *Childe Roland*.

Spent the whole day yesterday going over Prinzhorn's translation (*Nourritures terrestres*) with Groethuysen, who, as he had done the day before, reveals a charming unselfishness. He is to come back tomorrow with Alix Guillain.

On his recommendation I am reading Goethe's *Märchen*,⁶⁰ with more astonishment than real pleasure.

All these recent days practiced the piano for several hours. It seems to me that the muscles of my fingers are weakening and that they are acquiring their agility only at the expense of strength.

I receive a book: *Our Present Philosophy of Life (According to Bernard Shaw, André Gide, Freud, and Bertrand Russell)* by Montgomery Beligion. The study on me, the longest in the volume, strikes me as so interesting, in spots, that I am inclined to want to see it translated. Excellent choice of quotations and excellent juxtaposition of quotations so that they explain and set each other off to advantage. Rather absurd, on the other hand, and inexact the summary of certain of my books—particularly of *L'Immoraliste* and of *Le Retour de l'enfant prodigue* (but this hardly matters). I stumble on this: "Man by nature is, Mr. Gide feels, good." I reflect and look into my mind. No, I do not believe, like Rousseau, that the natural man is always good, nor that all the evil is the result of deformations and deviations brought about later by civilization, society, etc., etc. I am less and less (and even to the point of being "the least possible") a believer in utopia, a mystic, and think that that belief in an original stage of paradise involves a dose of shocking naïveté; but I consider it awkward, unprofitable, un instructive to stand (solely) on the plane of *good* and *evil* in order to judge human actions, or, more exactly, in order to appreciate their value. That idea of humanity's *progress* which now dominates my life (and of which, as I have said elsewhere, the "progress" Flaubert laughed at is but the caricature) leads us to see that the idea of *the good* (comfortable, reassuring, and such as the middle classes cherish) invites to stagnation, to sleep. I believe that often *evil* (a certain evil that is not the result of a *deficiency*, but rather a manifestation of energy) has a greater educative and initiatory value than what you call *good*. Yes, I firmly believe this, and ever more and more.

⁶⁰ *The Tale of Tales.*

But this ought to be developed and linked up with (subordinated to) other considerations — and in particular this one that I already glimpsed (and even did more than glimpse) in my youth, before having been so long distracted from myself by sympathy: that is, that today we rate humanity much too high; that man is not interesting, important, worthy to be adored, for his own sake; that what invites humanity to progress is precisely not to consider itself (and its comfort and the satisfaction of its desires) as an end, but rather as a means through which to achieve and realize something. This is what made me say, through the person of my Prometheus: "I do not love man; I love what devours him," and made me put my wisdom in this: knowing how to prefer to man the eagle that feeds on him.

16 November

It seems to me that I should now write masterpieces — if only the time were not lacking. This revision of the Prinzhorn translation of the *Nourritures*, however interesting it may be, wears me out. Every day we work at it until past eleven o'clock. At times the difficulties and our desire for perfection are such that we spend more than two hours on a page.

I should like, in reply to all the requests from bores, to send a printed card which would read, under my name: "is working and urgently begs you to leave him alone for a while"; this joined to the usual formulas of salutation.

Yet I managed to give two hours to the piano today and the last few days. I have picked up again Chopin's *Études*, which I had long neglected, particularly the third, fifth, and eleventh of the second book. Moreover, there are very few that I do not know by heart.

18 November

Excellent piano-practice. Oh, if only I had been better advised, guided, encouraged, forced, in my youth! If only the pleasure I get from this practice could be less selfish! I have occasionally managed to play the *Preludes* (in F-sharp major and in E-flat major particularly) in such a way as to satisfy myself, to surprise and delight whoever had heard me. But if he had been there and if I had known that he could hear me, my playing would immediately have become frozen.

There is a certain enveloping by the musical phrase, a certain seizure of the listener, a certain "let yourself be led" that I have never seen achieved, or even sought for, by any pianist. They are satisfied to present the piece; their execution neither explains nor develops it, nor lets it be discovered. Yesterday I dictated a few pages on this subject, which, when I reread them, struck me as good. But I should like to say

much more about it — to speak especially of that false grace, that affection (delay of the upper note unexpectedly flatted — to beguile an expectation one must first cajole it — toward the end of the Prelude in F major ⁶¹) which unfailingly reveals its cloven hoof wherever real sensuality — rich, disturbing, indecent — is lacking.

Oh, how the simpering grace of that E flat rippled thus seems sure of itself, conscious of the effect it is about to produce! (The Countess de Noailles entering a drawing-room. At last! Here She is!)

That that note is sweet I am well aware; do I need you to shout it at me! Let its strangeness disconcert me by itself; do not attempt to help it. If you do so, it is because you take me for a fool; and if I am not, it is you who are. Those subtle pauses are intolerable to me in the theater likewise, when the actor hesitates an instant to allow the public's admiration (and applause) to take shape. If I insist, it is because I take that E flat as an example of what I shall find again and again scattered here and there.

I picked up again yesterday, before going to bed and to cleanse my mind of all the cares of the day, Hugo's *Orientales*. My delight equals that of my childhood; it is enough for me to reread many of these poems in order still to know them by heart. What amazing rhetorical invention! Everything is there: strength, grace, a smile, and the most pathetic sobs. What resourcefulness! What a poetic upheaval! What verse technique that he plays upon! Such masterful ease is achieved only through an utter yielding to the suggestions of the words and of their sounds. It is a subordination of the thought to the word, to the sentence, to the image, and explains why Hugo, though not so stupid as he is said to be, always preferred the most banal emotions and thoughts so that he could give himself over completely to the physical pleasure of expressing them, of letting them spread and expand.

19 November

I go back to what I wrote a few days ago: no, it is not exact to say that my fingers no longer acquire agility save at the expense of their strength. But the demands I make upon myself are a bit too impatient, and my muscles, after too insistent practice, weaken. Since they re-

⁶¹ According to Valéry's lines:

*Je veux faire attendre
Le mot le plus tendre.* [A.]

Valéry's poem *L'Insinuant* closes with this quatrain:

*O meandering play,
Secrets of the liar,
I want to delay
The sweetest to say.*

cover their vigor the next day, even increased, there is no occasion to be worried about that momentary weakness. Each day I perfect the great *Étude* in D minor until it is impossible to wish for more power, more spirit, or greater preciseness.

This morning, after a rather good night, I again feel quite fit.

I feel utterly happy only when faced with an entirely free day that I can give completely to work.

Long letter in German from the Saturn Verlag of Vienna, which claims the right to publish a translation of my *Oscar Wilde*. First I must try to understand everything; dictate a letter to the Saturn Verlag, another to the Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, to which I have also granted the rights, it seems; another to the translator whose work is sent me. . . . Then one to Aelberts, who wants to publish my *Letters* in two volumes; one to a publisher who wants to discuss a plan with me . . . etc. The whole morning is spent this way. . . . I wonder if the still unknown young writer who cannot succeed in getting his writings published is not less tormented than he whom too many people solicit.

When I see how fit I feel in body and mind after a good night's sleep, I wonder at all I should be capable of if only I slept more regularly every night.

If only! . . . thus begin the most futile recriminations. One must resign oneself to one's sufferings.

20 November

This morning, visit from Jean Cassou accompanied by a would-be⁶² publisher who, I am told, is going to publish that Anglo-French or Franco-English review a representative of which recently came to ask permission to publish my translation of the first act of *Hamlet*.⁶³ Cassou having asked me what I think of Pourtalès's translation, I am led to speak to him of that odd misinterpretation (?) that almost all translators make and which I wish to note here, for it is most significant.

The ghost, speaking to Hamlet in Scene v of Act I, expresses himself thus:

*But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.*

⁶² The expression *would-be* appears in English.

⁶³ The Franco-American review *Échanges* published Gide's version of the first act of *Hamlet* in December 1929. Not until 1942 did he continue his translation of Shakespeare's tragedy, which first appeared in New York in 1945.

Pourtalès (like many others) translates this:

"... thus lust, though linked to a radiant angel, will *grow tired* of a celestial bed to go and prey on garbage . . ." ⁶⁴ dropping out, it seems to me, the best and most important part of the image and the thought, which he makes banal: it is not a question here of turning away from the celestial bed but rather of bringing the garbage to it. I believe the true meaning is:

"So lust, even though married to an angel, will glut itself on a celestial bed and there will prey on garbage (will bring garbage there)." ⁶⁵

"Perhaps your mind was especially bent toward this interpretation after you had translated *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*," Cassou said to me.

25 November

Strohl, always most charmingly thoughtful, sends me, together with two bits of amber containing almost invisible insects, a little paper by Maurice Trembley read in 1902 before the Société Helvétique des Sciences Naturelles. This little study recounts the observations of his grandfather Abraham Trembley on fresh-water polyps and quotes several letters from the latter to Réaumur. From Maurice Trembley's conclusions I pick out this sentence, which delights me:

"He (the good observer) recognizes the necessity and the advantage there is in knowing how to doubt at the right moment and is able to doubt his own conclusions.

"He constantly makes an effort to see facts as they are in reality and not as he would like to see them."

I should have preferred: "as he would like them to be."

But this doesn't matter: his remark is perfect.

And he adds:

"It is in this regard that Réaumur (since he is concerned here) served the cause of science better than Buffon."

30 November

Read Euripides' *Phœnissæ* without finding much in it to keep for my *Cedipe*. Then, with the most lively interest, the chapters devoted to Racine in Sainte-Beuve's *Port-Royal*. Strenuous but somewhat impatient piano-practice. Wrote several new pages on Chopin.

⁶⁴ "... ainsi la luxure, bien qu'accouplée à un ange radieux, se dégoûtera d'un lit céleste pour s'aller gorgier d'ordure . . ."

⁶⁵ "Ainsi la luxure, encore que mariée à un ange, se soûlera sur une couche céleste et s'y repaîtra d'immondices (y apportera l'immondice)."

In the 1945 version this has become "... ainsi la luxure, qu'on la marie avec un ange, si céleste que soit la couche elle saura s'y satisfaire, et s'y repaître d'immondices." The sense is the same.

When *Numquid et tu . . . ?* is reprinted I should like some charitable friend to add this note (if I am not here to do it myself or if I forget) to the sentence that I am going to quote imperfectly, but which will be easily recognized: "My Lord, permit me to need You tomorrow morning":

"Certain commentators, eager to find me at fault, are willing to see in this remark only an unconscious confession of indifference, a desire to make God wait, to put Him off till the morrow. I protest that my thought was quite different and that this sentence (one has only to put it into context to become aware of this) means merely this: My Lord, may my first thought on awaking be for You, as my last thought this evening is for You; and that writing 'to need You tomorrow morning' in no wise signified that I did not already and immediately feel that *need*."

At that time He used to fill me utterly. For the really devout soul can *the rest* preserve any real value? My need for God has ever been constant.

Élisabeth V. R., who is amazed to see little Catherine so disinclined to miss La Bastide, tries to question her on this subject. Is it a lack of memory? No, she remembers everything.

"You didn't like La Bastide, then?"

"Oh, yes! Very much."

"But tell me . . . where do you most like to be?"

The question seems so odd to the child that at first she appears to be disconcerted.

Then, in her most natural voice, and as if it couldn't be otherwise:

"Why . . . *wherever I am*."

This morning Élisabeth and Catherine took to Bormes, to give it to the little daughter of the Mayrisches' gardener, a puppy, the son of Nyska. Catherine was crazy about him; she never let him out of her sight. It seemed that she must have been very sorry to give him away.

Yesterday Élisabeth told her of her plan:

"Oh, what a good idea!" Catherine exclaimed at once. "How happy she will be!"

Regret is an emotion that is not natural to her, that she cannot "produce" *naturally*.

Later on, this spontaneous optimism may seem affected to others and to herself, and yet nothing is more sincere. But one comes to suspect the sincerity of a feeling that is too rare.

2 December

Radiant morning. Managed to devote four to five hours to the piano all these recent days; perfected (and really succeeded in bringing to perfection) several *Études* and *Preludes*.

Saw come out of their chrysalis two laurel hawk-moths. I am reading *L'Abbesse de Jouarre*,⁶⁸ with no admiration.

I have discovered quite by chance and without much believing in astrology that it just happens that on the 21st of November, my birthday, our earth leaves the influence of Scorpio to enter that of Sagittarius.

Is it my fault if your God took such great care to have me born between two stars, the fruit of two races, of two provinces, and of two faiths?⁶⁷

3 December

L'Abbesse de Jouarre strikes me as beneath the ordinary, childish. — Real repulsion for this flabby style: "Fate does not grant two such delights as the one I enjoyed last night. . . ." And Renan is still considered a master of the French language!

4 December

Glaeser writes me: "*Mit grossem Entsetzen las ich eine Passage in einem Interview, das ich L. gab, die Ihnen galt. Der Text über Stirb und Werde est von L. absolut erfunden. Ich muss Ihnen das sagen.*"⁶⁸

This is not the first letter I have received about those interviews of L. Bennett particularly complained that L. made him praise authors whose very name he did not know and say many things he had never thought.

I am noting this down carefully here in order to put historians and critics of the future on their guard: the only worth-while ones among those "*une heure avec . . .*" are those that were written by the authors themselves and that L. had to be satisfied to sign.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ A novel by Ernest Renan.

⁶⁷ André Gide's father came from a Protestant family of the *Gard département* in the south, whereas his mother issued from a traditionally Catholic family of Normandy.

⁶⁸ "With great horror I read a passage in an interview that I gave to L., which was about you. The text about *Si le grain ne meurt . . .* was absolutely invented by L. I must tell you this."

⁶⁹ Frédéric Lefevre's interviews with writers appeared regularly in the *Nouvelles littéraires* under the title of "An Hour with. . . ."

If I could merely manage to sleep a little more, a little better, I believe I should accomplish wonders. Yesterday evening took some tablets; but then the sleep that follows is so light that even the buzzing of a mosquito is enough to trouble it. Upon getting up I squash six against the wall; huge ones, filled with my blood — for last night, trying to toss less, I made up my mind to let them have their way. But this morning I take a certain pleasure in avenging myself.

Read much better pages of Renan. *L'Abbesse de Jouarre* is perhaps the worst thing he ever wrote.

8 December

There remain too many things that I should have liked to say, and should have said, and have not said, and which clutter up my mind.

I was like unto those creatures which cannot grow without successive metamorphoses.

That violence, that impetuosity of our desires does not seem to us to lie in us, but rather in the very object of our desires, whose attraction it constitutes. An attraction that therefore strikes us as irresistible; so that we are incapable of understanding that someone else can endow another type of object with the same irresistible attraction toward which a like impetuosity will impell him with an equal violence. Whoever is not first convinced of this would do better to remain silent in regard to sexual questions. For a mind to which a question appears in advance in the form of a reply, it can be said that the question has not even been posed. And will it not be permitted me to say that it is the same in matters of mystic adoration and that all those attractions of God (which they call attributes) which make him so essentially adorable are but a projection of their own inner fervor?

X. and Y. go about repeating that they are fed up with pretense, that they have made up their mind to speak frankly henceforth, to brave opinion, to burn their bridges behind them, etc. But they are not burning anything at all; they are very careful not to. The courage of which they boast costs them nothing of what they continue to cling to. And in the new book they have just produced they have taken great care that their confessions should be of such a sort and so speciously hidden that only the most alert readers can read them between the lines; of such a sort that they will have nothing to retract if later on they become converted or aim at the Academy; of such a sort that their future apologists will have no trouble sweeping it all away and can brand as slanderers those who, reading the truth between the lines, attempt to reassert that truth. Thus sham is accredited.

Today, when the risk of moral discredit is not so great as it once

was and the penalty is less severe, pretenses and camouflages are frequent in literature, I know. I tell myself that people have always lied when customs have forced people to lie, and, nothing authorizing me to believe Sodom more populated today than it was yesterday, I become somewhat suspicious in regard to some of our ancient authors.

Marseille, 27 December

The newspapers have related:

that a friend saw me, contrary to my custom, give fifty centimes to a beggar and heard me whisper, as I leaned toward him: "Yes, but when will you pay them back?"

that a fellow writer (another paper that relates the same absurdity said: an Italian prince), invited to dinner by me, waited in vain for me to call for the bill and was obliged to pay in my stead and to give a tip to the checkroom, while with clenched teeth, I said: "I can't help it; I am a miser."

that, going to cash a check at the bank and seeing people ahead of me at the cashier's window, I said: "I am André Gide and do not like waiting," in such a tone that I was served first.

that, caught by the rain at Luna Park, I exclaimed: "Gosh, it stinks!" assuming a roughneck manner that decidedly did not suit me. Etc.⁷⁰

When I am feeling well, this kind of thing has no effect on me; but as soon as I am weak, such hateful tales rise up within me and I suffer to feel such stupidity and hatred aroused against me. I also fear that such details may cling to my image, since I know so well that falsehood is more readily credited than truth.

I wander in the streets of Marseille, striving to warm up old desires. I encounter nothing but poverty, ugliness, sorrow . . . nothing that does not incline one more to pity than to desire. Can it be that, younger and more full of desire, all this would have seemed different to me?

⁷⁰ The first two bits of gossip are invented out of whole cloth. Not the two others. It is true that, going to the Société Générale, not with a check to cash but with an American banknote, I first inquired and was told that the currency exchange was not handled at the same window. This is why the anonymous witness saw me taken care of before the others, and, since I deposited the amount instead of taking it at once, I was able to leave the bank without having had to stand in line. If this malicious witness had had the slightest acquaintance with me, he would have known that I detest illegitimate favors and privileges and make it a point of honor never to get out of turn.

As for the episode of Luna Park, it is absurd; if I said to M.: "*Ca chelingue*," it was because we were passing through a smelly area. [A.] *Chelingue* is a vulgar expression.

La Souco-Roquebrune, 30 December

Radiant weather. Oh, to set sail, and for anywhere whatever! Why and how did I allow myself to be so long held in check, during my youth? At present I feel more desires in me than can be satisfied in the time that remains to me to live. Why did I not meet, at twenty, him who would have led me off! and whom I should have accompanied to the very ends of the earth. But at that time no one spoke of traveling; and it was already considerable to have gone as far as Algeria. What would my *Nourritures* have been like if I had known enough to take my hunger to the very tropics? But the strength of the bonds to be broken constitutes the beauty of the liberation, and my first care was to forge the bonds. I should like to regret nothing and to convince myself that, more obviously vagabond, my life would have been less significant; and that I should never have written *La Porte étroite*.

"Suffer me first to go and bury my father and mother," says to Christ he who refuses to understand that it is essential to follow Him *at once*. — Not knowing how to drop everything at once.

The morning hours are the best. If I let them be taken up by conversation, correspondence, and bustle, my whole day reflects this and is lost.

31 December

I am reading *High Wind in Jamaica* by Richard Hughes. Odd book, which would doubtless delight me more if I could attach it more completely to the author and understand better what made him write it. But perhaps it is merely an extraordinarily successful game that the author wins without at the same time winning over my heart. A book really interests me only if I feel it born of some inner necessity and if that necessity can find some echo in me. Many authors write rather good books today who could write different ones that would be just as good. I do not feel any secret relationship between them and their work, and they themselves do not interest me; they remain *littérateurs* and instead of listening to their demon (they have none), they listen to the public taste. They adapt themselves to what is and, far from that bothering them, they do not recognize themselves as *bothersome*.

La Souco, 1 January

NO good work without a long succession of hours, of quite empty days, before me. My hosts are willing, in friendly fashion, for me to escape them every morning. Yesterday I withdrew in this manner likewise for the whole afternoon. I *worked* a bit, something that I have not been able to do for months past. That is, I forced myself to write a whole scene of *Cedipe*, which this morning strikes me as very ordinary. I shall not be able to keep a single word of it. But, thanks to that work, I glimpse now what that scene ought to be: abrupt, extraordinarily clear and simplified. I always take great joy in suppressing everything useless. My waste-baskets fill up with "changes" that would have seemed mere stuffing; but what good is that false wealth to me? A writer is said to be rich and fertile who, often, is merely avaricious and does not know how, or dare, to suppress anything. (Strange example of Péguy, who, among all the lines that lead his thought from one point to another, unwilling to . . . choose, sets them all down, one after the other. I always long to draw the narrowest line, the most sudden and least expected.)

3 January

At Hyères, at the Noailleses', where I find Marc, together with Coc-teau and Auric, I had come merely for lunch; I gladly let myself be detained for dinner, then for the night. Extreme and charming kindness of our hosts; amazing ingenuity in comfort; such perfect functioning of everything that contributes to one's ease that this morning, when after my bath the English butler brings my breakfast, I butter my toast with a spoon, for fear that the absence of a knife, on the tray loaded with delicacies and fruits, might look like catastrophe.

Gymnastics, swimming in a rather large pool, new games, the names of which I do not know, with shuttlecocks and balls of all sizes — one especially that four of us played (the very pleasant gym teacher, Noailles, Marc, and I) with a medium-sized ball that one must keep from falling on this side of a high net that separates the two sides. We play almost naked, then, damp all over, run and plunge into the warm water of the pool. This game amused me more than I should have thought it still possible, amused me like a child and a god, and especially since I was not bad at it. What absurd things Pascal has said about games! And how the very gratuitousness of that struggle, of that effort, seems to me beautiful! Yes indeed, I cannot remember having had, even in my youth or childhood, more ardent, purer, and more complete pleasure.

I recall that Charlie Du Bos, after reading *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . , excusing himself for the little interest he took in the account of my childhood games, said: "But what do you expect, my friend? *I never played.*" This is the secret of a tremendous lack, which remains invisible to *whoever has never played*. As for me, on the other hand, I am always inclined to look upon art itself as a game, and upon the Cosmos as God's game.

9 January

A person has to be very unpleasant for me not to consider him charming. Oh, of course, I am well aware of the defects of a body, of a mind, of a face; but I have my own, get along with them, and can do so even better with those of others. I have always had even more appetite than greed. . . .

At that gathering yesterday at Blacque-Belair's, Roger Martin du Gard, A. Maurois, J. Romain, Schlumberger, Blacque himself, and Marc, I felt for each of them in turn a very urgent sympathy that filled me with joy as would have a heady wine.

It must be said that I had not had time to dine; an empty stomach often communicates that sort of intoxication. (A good meal likewise, moreover, but a heavy intoxication.) Marc had not dined either; Mimi immediately had some sandwiches and port brought in; after which the other guests did not seem to me any less attractive. Yes, each of them seemed to me charming, and especially A. Maurois (who can be excessively bright, but yesterday was reserved, full of half-hidden qualities, and almost shy; oh, I liked him very much!). (And it just happened that that very evening, when I got home, I read an American article that I had carried around in my pocket all day and which proved to be very complimentary and sensible, on *Un Esprit non prévenu*. It was by him.)

The oddest coincidences of late: at the Société Générale I go to cash an American check (in payment for *Dindiki*¹ from some review or other). The clerk on paying me 1,264 francs 50 asks for the number of my account — 12,645. The very same figures in exactly the same order. Such a combination is not encountered more than once in a thousand years, I suppose.

"Classic impersonality," says the critic who signs himself Robert le Diable in *L'Action française* when speaking of Lacretelle's latest book, so easily to be compared with my *Immoraliste*.² "Classic impersonality

¹ *Dindiki* is a supplement to *Travels in the Congo*.

² The novel by Lacretelle that is so close in theme to Gide's *Immoraliste* is *Amour nuptial* (*Married Love*), first published in 1929.

that M. Gide might well envy his disciple." — But I don't envy that quality at all! And I have never considered impersonality as a particularly classical virtue. On the contrary, I have always striven to give to each of my books the least impersonal character possible, the least objective, the most *penetrating*. It is just in regard to this matter that Chardonne's remark strikes me as so correct (try to find it again).

Returned from the south on the 7th with Lacretelle; seats reserved by him in the Pullman; meeting as the train went through Toulon, Lacretelle coming from Cap-Ferrat. I confess that I rather feared that long *confrontation* (for our two seats faced each other across a small table over which we had to lean to talk) and the effort of a conversation with someone a bit hard of hearing. No, the time passed most pleasantly, and Lacretelle, as it often happens, hears better when speech has a background of uninterrupted sound.

At the table directly opposite us was a rather attractive young couple. Probably a wedding-trip, for the table is covered with flowers. The young man was reading *Les Caves du Vatican*. This is the first time I have ever happened to meet someone actually reading *me*. (The scene: "Oh! Monsieur Duhamell!") Occasionally he turned toward me and, when I was not looking at him, I felt him staring at me. Most likely he recognized me. Lacretelle kept telling me: "Go ahead! Tell him who you are. Sign his book for him. . . ." In order to do this I should have had to be more certain that he liked the book, in which he remained absorbed even during the meal. But suddenly I saw him take a little knife out of his pocket. . . . Lacretelle was seized with uncontrollable laughter on seeing him slash *Les Caves du Vatican*. Was he doing so out of exasperation? For a moment I thought so. But no: carefully he cut the binding threads, took out the first few sheets, and handed a whole part of the book that he had already read to his young wife, who immediately plunged into her reading.

I receive the first copy of the reprinting of *Le Voyage d'Urien*.³ In the table of contents the heading *Mer des Sargasses* immediately follows *Prélude*.

I notice that in both the Stols and the Émile-Paul editions the subtitle of the first part, *Voyage sur l'Océan pathétique*, has been likewise omitted.

For a future edition, let me set down here how the book should be made up:

³ *Urien's Travels*, Gide's subtle and ironic prose-poem in the symbolist mode, first appeared in 1893.

Prelude.

I. — Travels on the Pathetic Ocean.

II. — The Sargasso Sea.

III. — Trip toward a Glacial Sea.

Envoy.

Likewise the epigraph from Virgil has been dropped:

Dic quibus in terris . . .

which is to balance the one in *Paludes*:

Dic cur hic . . .

(The other school . . .)⁴

26 January

First time out after twelve days of limbo. Laryngitis; exhausting cough; utter stultification. Almost no work save correcting the proofs of the *Lettres*, of the Crès reprinting of *Les Cahiers d'André Walter*, of the translation of *Les Nourritures*. . . . Little or no reading. Not even any desire to open this notebook. I should like to flee to shelter in the south. This cold fell upon me just as I was about to go to Couverville, whose bad weather now terrifies me. I should like to be far away from everything and everyone, from myself, and from life. . . .

27 January

Mme Théo tells us this evening of her grandparents Maximilien and Persévérance, who within the family called each other Maxim and Persé. They often twitted the grandmother.

"Go ahead and laugh!" she used to say on such occasions. "You will remember me when you have forgotten all the others."

Quite witty, moreover. One day she accompanied little Maria to a tea-party. They were served café au lait, according to the Walloon custom, with rolls split in the middle and buttered inside. The relative whose guest they were had the reputation of being somewhat stingy. She was obliged to leave the room a moment and, while she was gone, Grandmother Persé took a roll, opened it, and, smiling at the narrow trail of butter:

"If the edges want any, they'll have to come closer together!"

Roquebrune, 4 February

I believe their world to be quite imaginary, but I myself can only imagine it as superior.

⁴ The epigraph of *Urien's Travels*: "Tell me in what lands . . ." is from Virgil: *Bucolics*, III, 104-5; that of *Morasses*: "Tell me why this . . ." is probably made up on the Virgilian model.

In other words, their world (of grace, etc.) would be superior if it were not simply imaginary.

You can convince yourself of anything and you believe what you want to believe. Then you dub as "higher reality" that construction of the mind. How could it fail to be superior to everything else as soon as you believe in it? And how could you believe in it unless you believed it superior to everything . . . ?

And if "the pearl of great price" for which a man gives up all his possessions turns out to be a false pearl . . . ?

What matter — if he who obtains it does not know this?

Those "problems" which passionately concerned humanity, and without a solution to which it seemed that men could not really live, cease to interest one after another, not at all because the solution is discovered, but because life withdraws from them. They die as soon as they cease to be *urgent*, so that one is not even aware that they are dying, for they have no death-agony, but simply: they are dead.

It is most likely that a "problem" that interests only one country will likewise concern only one moment of its history.

This revival of Thomism, and the writings of Maritain, and the quarrel of *L'Action française*, etc., in which we flay each other, will soon seem only historical curiosities and I wonder if anyone but an archæologist will be able to take any interest in them.

No doubt of it: what Charlie Du Bos likes in Nietzsche is that he is at the point of death. He would turn away from him if Nietzsche were cured. What cajoleries he had for me so long as he thought me anguished, disturbed, and he could play the advantageous role of comforter! He used to caress himself against me like a cat.

One evening (at P.'s) we were stunned to hear him declare that he felt really capable of friendship only for women. He likes to bend over . . . and to pity, and to sympathize with. And everything would be all right if he were motivated by the need to make others happy. But let there be no mistake about it: what he likes is suffering itself, sorrow; this is what makes him feel Christian. He looks upon happiness as a *despiritualization* and this is what, by a secret intuition, warns him against Mozart. The very spiritualization of that exquisite art does not so much elude as embarrass him, that sovereign penetration and domination of suffering and joy by intelligence, by the mind, which purifies suffering itself of its injurious element (what Charlie considers its absolving virtue), so that, for Mozart, it becomes simply a deep purple in that rainbow which his genius serenely spreads before us.

Reached Vence on 2 February, still barely over a laryngitis that had condemned me to my room for a fortnight, and considerably dulled — moreover, exhausted by insomnia, or at least by the difficulty of sleeping properly in an apartment exposed to the sounds, and irritated by the interruptions, of Paris, etc. I was longing for the solitude I needed to complete my *Cedipe*; but I also needed greater comfort than was offered by the Vence pension where Herbart had reserved a room for me, and where I thought I should die of cold during the night. The very next morning I ordered a car and rushed to Roquebrune where I knew that I should find the warmest welcome at the house of my friends the Bussys. . . .

I am writing these uninteresting lines seated on a sunny embankment above the main road, waiting for little Guido to pass after lunch. His smile, the last time I was here, constituted my joy.

13 February

Saddened, the last few days, by the fear that little Guido may be avoiding me. Nothing of the sort. I managed to find out last night. He went by on the road; I accompanied him to the village, where he was going to mail a letter and where he remained for some time playing with four other children, first in the streets, then on the terrace in front of the school. Bright moonlight. I rather unwisely tarried with them and even thought that I had caught cold again; but the attraction was so great that I abandoned all prudence. Besides, the hope of going back down with Guido kept me there. Utterly chilled, I dragged myself away from them and returned home on the run; then, somewhat warmed up, went back up to the village and found them still there, unable to resign myself to leaving Guido. He was in a grocery, whence he came out with a package and a bottle of bleaching water, and at last I was able to go back down with him as far as La Souco.

There is hardly any desire in this; or it is so confused, so drowned in a general liking, that it becomes indistinguishable. But the joy that I feel throughout my whole being is so great that it makes me forget my age, dominates all other preoccupations, all regard for the conventions.

Roquebrune, 23 February

Ten days without having written anything in this notebook; all the time it would have taken, but no desire. Frightfully dull days; gray, cold, rainy weather. That insane curiosity, yes, that mania (for I yield much more to impetus than to a new exigence, and I should be unlikely to invent today, at the impulse of a diminished desire that at last lets the bridle hang, the inner or outer acts to which habit above all incites me and which I scarcely risk now save mechanically or through con-

scious imitation of a past that I seem thereby to be reviving . . .), that mania which I rather indulgently exaggerated above is probably the cause of the cold I caught, which made me, for the last ten days, and with the aid of the bad weather, so doleful, so weak and dull, without virtue, without desire for work, without enjoyment in living, without joy. Nothing but the enveloping affection of my friends the Bussys warms me somewhat and keeps me from despair (I am using this word, moreover, in a solely privative sense, almost the equivalent of apathy). Yes indeed, it is some time since I have lived through a succession of duller and more colorless and less profitable days.

Not enough fervor to heat to the boiling-point my *Cedipe*, of which I had taken out the fragments at the beginning of my stay here; barely enough intelligence to be aware of its shortcomings. It is better to let it lie, to await that exigence which only the most naturally produced works of art satisfy. Moreover, I like to compare this sleep to that of the chrysalis; I like the production, the writing, to be like the rapid, almost sudden bursting forth of an adult, an accomplished creature, formed by slow and secret operations, which abruptly springs forth like Minerva issuing armed from the brain of Jupiter. The coming to light of a beautiful work of art is always accompanied, for the creator, by surprise. Oh, how little I have surprised myself, for some time now! Whence the little pleasure I take in living.

Read, with the greatest interest, *The School for Scandal*,⁵ which I was both ashamed and happy not to have known before; then *A Winter's Tale*, which I already knew very well but feared confusing with *Twelfth Night*; then, for the first time in English, the wonderful *Measure for Measure*. Skimmed through a book by Grierson, interesting no doubt, but repetitive. And reread *Under Western Eyes* in the excellent translation by Neel. A masterful book, but one that smells a bit too much of work and application; overconscientiousness (if I may say so) on Conrad's part, in the continuity of outline. Even the latent irony which one feels flowing through the book might have been, one feels, lighter and more amused. Conrad unbends only to become prolix and diffuse. The book is perfectly done, but without ease. One does not know what deserves more admiration: the amazing subject, the fitting together, the boldness of so difficult an undertaking, the patience in the development of the story, the complete understanding and exhausting of the subject; and when one closes the book, the reader would like to say to the author: And now let us rest a bit.

Much interested by the relationship I discover between *Under Western Eyes* and *Lord Jim*. (I regret not having spoken of this with

⁵ Richard Brinsley Sheridan's comedy.

Conrad.) That *irresponsible act* of the hero, to redeem which his whole life is subsequently engaged. For the thing that leads to the heaviest responsibility is just the *irresponsibilities* in a life. How can one efface that act? There is no more pathetic subject for a novel, nor one that has been more stifled in our literature by belief in Boileau's rule: that the hero must remain, from one end to the other of a drama or a novel, "such as he was first seen to be."

29 February

The pernicious and deplorable influence of Barrès. There has been no more baneful educator, and everything that remains marked by his influence is already dying, already dead. His qualities as an artist were monstrously exaggerated; is not all the best in him already found in Chateaubriand? Nothing better marks his limits than his *Cahiers*, which, in this regard, are powerfully interesting. His taste for death, for the beyond, his Asiaticism; his desire for popularity and applause, which he takes for a love of fame; his lack of curiosity, his ignorance, his scorn; the choice of his gods; but what I dislike most of all: the finicky affectation, the soft prettiness of certain sentences, in which breathes the soul of Mimi Pinson. . . .⁶

9 March

Back to Paris, yesterday at noon. Notable improvement, though my throat is still irritated. I ought to give up smoking. And as I write these words I light another cigarette.

My mind is waking up somewhat from this long hibernation. Some progress in English. I now succeed in understanding currently Dorothy Bussy's conversation and reading. Read with delight, enthusiasm, the two *Henry IV's* and the *Henry V* of Shakespeare.

Ceased thinking, for a time, of my *Œdipe* (which nevertheless has been greatly enriched by the reflections arising from Mauriac's article on Molière in that monument of boredom, the first issue of *Vigile*)⁷ — in favor of a book that I now glimpse and which is already taking shape: *Geneviève* or *La Nouvelle École des femmes* — in which I shall

⁶ This influence is marked in Montherlant's pages, very beautiful as they are, which I read in the latest *Nouvelles littéraires*. It could lead only to despair as soon as one refused to take seriously the role and attitude that Barrès himself had at first assumed only to escape boredom. [A.] Mimi Pinson is the central character in a story of the same name by Alfred de Musset. The typical *grisette*, or Paris working girl, she has come to be a symbol of naïve sentimentality.

⁷ *Vigil* was a short-lived Catholic literary quarterly founded in 1930 and edited by Charles Du Bos.

boldly tackle the whole question of feminism.⁸ I long to get to Cuverville to work on it.

13 March

I find on my table, for it had come during my absence, a thick *Cahier de la Nouvelle Journée* (a collection I did not know) entitled: *De Renan à Jacques Rivière* and, as a subtitle, *Dilettantisme et amoralisme*.⁹

I find in it, in a rather firm and rhythmic language, a repetition of all Massis's arguments against my influence. This publication comes from the same camp as Massis and, like him, attacks everything that is not Catholic. But I read in it:

"Is it not time to open a last time that admirable poem of *Faust* that Renan commented upon at the seminary of Issy and to meditate upon the teaching it contains?" (Page 77.)

Yet Massis wrote me in the letter I received from him a month ago at Roquebrune:

"Many years ago I read Barbey d'Aurevilly's book on Goethe; and, to satisfy your curiosity, I shall confess to you that I consider his judgment admirable and subscribe to it wholly. Moreover, Benjamin Constant, with remarkable perspicacity, had already said the same thing; he called Goethe: a Voltaire without wit."

There followed two pages, very well written, and in a quite different tone from the one Massis generally uses in regard to me, which rather stirred me despite myself. Should I answer him? Say to him: "My dear Massis, you would not write me thus if you did not know me to be very different from the one whom . . . if you did not know that the tone you suddenly assume here is the one most likely of all to stir me. . . ."

But what is the good? We cannot, we are not made to, agree. Yet I should very much have liked to copy for him these sentences of Cardinal Newman that Grierson quotes:

"We may feel great repugnance to Milton and Gibbon as men; we may most seriously protest against the spirit which ever lives, and the tendency which ever operates, in every page of their writings; but there they are, an integral portion of English literature; we cannot extinguish them; we cannot deny their power; we cannot write a new Milton or a new Gibbon; we cannot expurgate what needs to be exor-

⁸ *Geneviève*, published in 1939, forms indeed with *The School for Wives* and *Robert* the third panel of the triptych: after the wife and the husband have told their tales in turn, the daughter now recounts the story as she saw it.

⁹ This study by a Catholic critic named J. Chaix under the title *From Renan to Jacques Rivière: Dilettantism and Amoralism*, appeared in 1930.

cised. They are great English authors, each breathing hatred to the Catholic Church in his own way, each a proud and rebellious creature of God, each gifted with incomparable gifts. We must take things as they are if we take them at all." (*English Catholic Literature*.)

But the method of Massis and his clan is to deny all value to those they cannot annex; to annex all those to whom they cannot deny all value — not admitting that anything good and beautiful can be which is not, thereby and automatically, *Catholic*.

I am resuming the delightful habit of reading while walking, my attention rather less solicited by what is going on in the street. Took Pope as a companion the last few days. I read in the *Essay on Criticism*:

*Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized:
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same law which first herself ordained.*

Perfect; it is impossible to say it better (so reasonable a truth and so reasonably expressed . . . nothing could be more antipoetic; but what matter?).

14 March

I am curious enough to look up in Benjamin Constant's *Journal* the passages concerning Goethe. Some of them, all those relating to the first meetings, are, to be sure, rather irreverent and seem to prove Massis's point. But, soon thereafter, I note:

"He is a man full of wit, of flashes, of depth, of new ideas." (Page 9.)

"I do not know anyone in the world who has more wit, finesse, force and breadth of mind than Goethe." (Page 13.)

"Goethe is a universal mind and, perhaps, the first poetic genius to exist in the vague *genre* that sketches out without filling in." (Page 33.) — and finally, in a letter to the Countess de Nassau, dated 23 January 1804:

"Goethe and Wieland . . . are men of amazing wit, especially Goethe."

Simple faith takes the place of good faith.

Visit from Charlie Du Bos; together we lunch at Mme Théo's. I always have great pleasure in seeing him, but can no longer be natural and sincere with him; and I do not really know what goes into his friendship, since I have taken away from him all reason to pity me and the hope of converting me.

To what a degree the confessional warps his tastes, his admirations, his thoughts, I realized yesterday in unexpected fashion:

I do not know how, having begun to talk of Keats, Charlie read me a long passage of *The Fall of Hyperion*, which I told him I did not yet know. Somewhat indulgently, I followed him in expressing my admiration for those lines which he read with a charming voice. During the night following our conversation, unable to sleep, I picked up the little volume and reread from the beginning *The Fall of Hyperion*, which seemed to me, I must say, less good Keats. I came to the long passage read by Charlie, in which I see only too well what can please and flatter him. . . . Eventually, continuing my reading, a succession of admirable lines that, suddenly, *I recognize*. These are the lines that Keats took over into the other *Hyperion*, as I note the next morning. I read attentively the note to *The Fall of Hyperion*. . . . Either Keats returned to this first version, dropping the least good; or else on the other hand this *Fall of Hyperion* is posterior and one must see in it, with Charles Brown, an effort on the part of Keats "of remodelling the fragment of H. into the form of a Vision" which, says the note, "perhaps affords the most astounding instance on record of the loss of artistic power and perception under physical decay and mental agony" — whether it is "a re-cast or a draft" — I wonder at the way Charlie becomes enthusiastic about just those least good passages and prefers them simply because he finds in them traces of that "spirituality" which will perhaps allow him to annex to Catholicism a poet he admires above all and whom he felt about to escape him.

"Annex to Catholicism" is perhaps going too far, and probably is an insult to Charlie's perfect integrity. But is it not already too much that he should admire a weakness and that it should be that weakness that awakens the most echo in him?

I was still in the next to last year in school when I read *Hyperion* for the first time. It was Louÿs who, informed by his brother, introduced me to it. Neither one of us knew English and we had to look up word after word in the dictionary.

19 March

Read with the greatest interest Lasserre's book on Abélard (*Un Conflit religieux au XII^e siècle*),¹⁰ which he had sent me. Read it almost at one sitting. With the very subject of this dramatic story, I recognized the emotion, the passion that Rémusat's drama awakened in me as I was finishing my next to last year in school.¹¹ I have never reread that play and do not know what it is worth as literature, but it acted upon me in much the same way as the Witches' prophecy in *Macbeth*.

¹⁰ *A Religious Conflict in the Twelfth Century*.

¹¹ Charles-François-Marie de Rémusat's *Abélard*, a verse drama, dates from 1879.

21 March

I am beginning to concern myself with *Geneviève*. Is it laziness, fear, or need of putting off real work that makes me read with such enthusiasm? Finished Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. Reread, with Em., Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. A novel by Werfel, rather irritating. Then, yesterday, *Rodogune*,¹² which I did not remember very well. Beyond almost unbearable mountains of rhetoric, an almost admirable fifth act. Striking touches of boldness in grammar:

*The guilty one is punished, and your hands innocent.*¹³

And, two lines further:

. . . I know not . . .

Which grieves me the more, his life or his death . . .

*The one and the other brings me unparalleled misfortunes.*¹⁴

All the boldnesses of this style are not, alas! so happy, and even the most beautiful groups of lines suddenly open up frightful abysses.

Began Dryden's *All for Love*.

I read in Swift's *Journal to Stella* under date of 27 March 1713:

"I went afterward to see a famous moving picture, and I never saw anything so pretty. You see a sea ten inches wide, a town at the other end, and ships sailing in the sea and discharging their cannon. . . ." ¹⁵

What did he mean at that time by "moving picture"? A magic lantern probably.

I had lost the habit — I am getting it back — of demanding more of myself. I had lost it almost intentionally, almost methodically, judging that it is not good to be always tense, that free-and-easiness rests us and can also teach us something. My bad state of health, moreover, led to a great relaxing of constraint. And, as age comes on, it is always harder to resume that constraint after having once dropped it. In this regard Montaigne is not a very good master. And finally, interrupted constantly by bores and little cares and duties. . . . But during these first six days of tranquillity I have managed to get back into training, and worked rather well yesterday. Still much reading, but this will soon yield to production. I feel better, besides, though my nerves are still tense.

Read some Swift, Pope's first *Epistle* (the first part of which seemed

¹² *Rodogune* is a melodramatic tragedy by Pierre Corneille (1644) dealing with the love of two brothers for the Parthian Rodogune, held captive by their mother Cleopatra, Queen of Syria.

¹³ In the line *La coupable est punie, et vos mains innocentes*, the daring consists in suppressing the verb in the second half-line and thus making, by implication, a singular verb serve for a plural subject.

¹⁴ *L'une et l'autre a pour moi des malheurs sans exemple.*

¹⁵ The quotation appears in English.

to me so excellent that I wanted to translate it). Reread almost all of *Rodogune* just after having finished it — with the result that I admire it much more; continued Dryden's *All for Love* with great interest — and read at random some exquisite letters by Gray in the big old edition that I brought back from Cambridge. Finally, wrote ten or twelve pages for *Geneviève* as fast as I could write and without much trying to polish them as I went. I am leaving this notebook to get back to them.

It takes a certain amount of intelligence in order to suffer because of not having more. No one is more fatuous than a simpleton.

I should like to discover the cause of that nervousness, irritation, boredom, that *far-awayness*¹⁶ I surprise in Marcel D.'s eyes in the midst of the conversations I have with him. I believe that the taste for the peculiar, the odd, the unsuitable that he thinks he feels in me is unbearable to him; and when I am with him I cannot refrain from exposing and laying myself open to him, just as, when I used to be with Théo, I irresistibly broached money-matters despite the exasperation I knew he would feel and which I felt myself. I very rarely feel master of myself when with others; and the opinion I feel being formed of me, however false it may be, draws me, making me do everything necessary to justify and strengthen it. Always been this way and have never been so unattractive to anyone as, often, to myself.

I read in Morand's *New York*: "In 1755, that is twelve years after London, *The School for Scandal* was played in New York."

Sheridan's play dates from 1777. If the whole book is as well documented as this . . .

Cuverville, 31 March

I thought this was the 24th of March and here it is already the end of the month. What have I done all these recent days? Wrote some thirty pages of that *Geneviève*, but do not know whether or not I shall be able to complete it successfully. I keep repeating to myself that this book must be written without any care for style and that any effort toward formal perfection I might evidence in it would reveal my hand too obviously; my heroine cannot have these qualities and I should betray her character by attributing them to her. I easily escape from myself and, letting a very different personality substitute itself for mine, only through complete self-effacement and an utter lack of application can I let it express itself appropriately through me. But I feel

¹⁶ Gide has coined the word *absentement* here.

no satisfaction in writing, as women do, with rapid ease, and I dislike everything I write this way. I begin to doubt that this style lacking in density can have any value and sometimes fear I am hazarding a desperate undertaking, unworthy of all the other projects which I then reproach myself with having forsaken for this one. I must admit to myself that this book does not touch me very deeply and does not reply to any profound exigency like that which dictated to me my *Nouvelles Nourritures* and my *Cedipe*. Yet I should not give it up without cowardice, and the inclination that urges me to write it is great enough to nourish the book. With each of my books have I not managed, on my bad days, to give myself good reasons for *not* writing it? And as for everything I think of this book today, is not mere laziness prompting me?

I have returned to the piano, which I had not opened in the last three months; delight at finding my memory so good, better perhaps than on my best days. It was enough for me to work over them for a few hours in order to bring back to memory all the preludes and fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavichord* I had learned, and even some I had not seen in a long time, and which I certainly play better than I used to.

Read a great deal of English with an extraordinary pleasure, and more and more easily. I do not think that my faculties are diminishing, but a secret, morose resignation makes me apply them with less hope and ardor. I aspire less to vanquish what strikes me as less impregnable or less indispensable to my happiness. The satisfaction it would give me seems to me more empty, and the time too short that is left me to enjoy it. It is not without self-directed irony that I am still striving to learn, and not without smiling at my vain curiosity. Everything I learn today could have been of some advantage to me twenty years earlier; this is what I constantly tell myself, and that the heavier the baggage is, the harder it is to move on when the hour comes. Then I tell myself, immediately afterward, that of all fruitless anxieties there is none more fruitless than that of death (though it constantly pursues me) and that the part of wisdom is to go on living without thinking too much that one must die. That constant idea of death, moreover, does not exactly sadden me; on the contrary, I am unwilling to admit that it should darken my thoughts. But, looking back over my life, what saddens me rather is the thought of the little I have done, the thought of all I might have and should have done. All the books I should have written, so many countries I might have known, so much happiness I might have caused. An unaccountable diffidence, modesty, shyness, reticence, laziness, excessive understanding of the *other side*, etc., have constantly held me back, unfailingly checked me in mid-course. I have always been paralyzed by scruples and by fear of hurt-

ing whomever I loved; and nothing is more ruinous when one loves what differs from oneself.

It goes without saying that I feel all this especially at Cuverville and when with Em. He whose heart is free can go far; I have never been able to keep myself from taking into account everything that kept me from advancing, never resigning myself to going alone and ever more anxious to lead others than to venture forth alone. Real pioneers do not care whether or not they are followed; they go forward without looking back.

In the Congo what joy could I take in gathering unknown flowers with no one to whom to give them?

Invited by Samuel Johnson, I am reading with the greatest admiration Pope's epistle, *Eloisa to Abelard*. My regard for Pope has only grown as I have come to know him better; and why should I not confess that this poetry heavy with meaning touches me more today than the vague ejaculations of a Shelley, for example, who forces me, in order to fly with him, to leave unsatisfied too important a part of myself.

Finished *Jane Eyre*.

Read in Sainte-Beuve's *Port-Royal* the chapters on Malebranche.¹⁷

Paris, 5 April

Back to Paris the evening of the 3rd. With better material conditions, it again seems to me that I should do wonders. My brain, after briefly becoming accustomed to work, again feels alert and fit. And even, yesterday, on an empty stomach and having managed not to smoke too much, I experienced a few moments of extraordinary joy and power.

At night, alas, every night, I enter the kingdom of terror. Giving up work and going to bed early to be sure of a good night, I do not get to sleep despite several tablets. Frightful itchings keep me awake, and when eventually a less provocative pain takes their place after I have scratched my legs to the bleeding-point, the troubled torpor into which I fall, still half-conscious, is a poor substitute for sleep and I deplore the coming of daylight, the return of sounds, having to get up at last, so little rested.

Yesterday saw Green and Breitbach. The latter goes with me to the N.R.F., where I have the pleasure of telling Benda all the good

¹⁷ *Port-Royal* is Sainte-Beuve's historical and critical account of the Jansenist movement of the seventeenth century, which had its headquarters at Port-Royal, outside Paris.

I think of his so remarkable, really excellent letter to Guéhenno, which filled me with satisfaction.¹⁸

6 April¹⁹

A lecture on me by René Lasne in Tunis, of which Bertaux, his former teacher, brought me the text last night — and in which I again note the amphibology present, even to the most indulgent eyes, in even the simplest sentences. Lasne quotes from *Amyntas*:

"I address my devotion this morning to the Saharan Apollo, whom I see, with golden hair, black limbs, and porcelain eyes."

When writing that sentence it never occurred to me that anyone could be misled and visualize that imaginary idol with really human features, I mean with the face of a living person. I ought probably not to have put a comma after "whom I see"; the verb would then have assumed a different meaning: that of: whom I imagine — whom I visualize with golden hair, etc. That sentence, which I liked, seems to me much less beautiful if it is to depict merely a flesh-and-blood "divinity."

Mauriac's studies on Molière and Rousseau.²⁰ More clever than accurate. The weight of "*Truth*" tips the delicate scale unfairly. In both cases he always finds what he was seeking, and only what he wanted to find. Likewise Charles Du Bos, in Walter Pater.²¹

"You would not seek me if you had not already found me." *Id est*: "You would not find me there if you had not already put me there."

Cuverville, 8 April

French literature, much more anxious to know and to depict man in general than men in particular. Ah, if only Bacon rather than Descartes! But Cartesianism was not concerned with *Every man in his humour*; ²² no great desire for experience and, all in all, insufficient curiosity. The so-called pure sciences preferred to the so-called *natural* sciences. Buffon himself is not a good observer.

¹⁸ Julien Benda's open letter to Jean Guéhenno in the April 1930 issue of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* replied to a letter by the latter in the February issue of *Europe* and further defined Benda's rigorous intellectualism while attacking those who servilely followed the doctrines of Romain Rolland.

¹⁹ The date of 9 April given in the French must be a misprint.

²⁰ In *Trois Grands Hommes devant Dieu* (*Three Great Men in Their Attitude toward God*), which appeared in 1930.

²¹ Du Bos, a Catholic critic deeply interested in English literature, devoted much study to the work and personality of Walter Pater, with whom he tended to identify himself.

²² The expression in italics appears in English.

The idea that one must start from the simple to reach the compound and that one can compound through deduction; that deceptive belief that the compound created by the mind corresponds to nature's complexity, that the concrete can be derived from the abstract. . . .

Lanson, in his very good study of the influence of Cartesianism (p. 89),²³ quotes Montesquieu's amazing declaration:

"I established principles and saw particular cases conform to them as if automatically. . . . When I discovered those principles, everything I was seeking came to me. . . ."

This is because he was seeking only what he had found in advance. Frightful limitation! And how much I admire, by contrast, Claude Bernard's remark, which I have noted somewhere or other and which I am probably quoting inexactly and amplifying:

"The true scholar (?) is he who is able to find in experience perhaps a reply to what he was seeking, but also to listen to the reply to what he was not asking";

who accepts considering even what he did not expect to see, were it to surprise and embarrass him considerably. The Cartesian does not accept ever being surprised. In short, he does not accept being taught.

Paris, 14 April

I was able to stay at Cuverville only four days; the first three poisoned by an article promised to a German review (*Die Koralle*) to go with some photos by Marc Allégret. Nothing to say about the Congo that I have not already served up. Horror of working on order. I constantly tell myself: all the time left me is not too much for . . .

From a letter from Marcel Drouin:

"Last night I read in Michelet's *La Montagne*:²⁴ *They laugh to see Xerxes in love with a plane tree*; a quarter of an hour later, in Donne: *Xerxes strange Lydian love, the platane tree*.

"It is especially odd," adds Marcel, "since the idea of *love* does not figure in Herodotus' text."

And on the other hand Michelet probably did not know Donne. What can be the source from which both drew?

Stuttgart, 9 a.m., Sunday, 26 (?) April

Seated on the terrace of my hotel (near the station). Warm air; radiant sky. Gardens; verdure. Cease to feel hurried by time. . . . The untrod lawns in which daisies, mayflowers, tulips, and promises of

²³ Gustave Lanson's scholarly essay, *L'Influence de la philosophie cartésienne sur la littérature française* was included in his *Études d'histoire littéraire* (*Studies in Literary History*) in 1929.

²⁴ *The Mountain*.

peonies, scattered about and unprotected, have nothing to fear from the strollers. The birds let themselves be approached like flowers, or approach you, and their confidence testifies to the Germans' sentimentality.

Bonn, 29 April

Hotel Rheineck. Delightful restaurant forming a large glassed-in bay facing the Rhine. I am writing this while dining (having arrived a little before eight after leaving Stuttgart at one o'clock). I was going to relate my two days in Stuttgart, but the idea of telephoning to Curtius at once. . . . I shall put off this story until tomorrow.

Fatuousness is always accompanied by a little stupidity. What permits the self-satisfaction of certain writers of today is their inability to understand what transcends them, to assign their correct value to the great writers of the past.

Berlin, May

To cease to take oneself into consideration for days, weeks, months. Lose sight of oneself. It amounts to going through a long tunnel beyond which one can hope to find a new landscape. . . . I have often feared that an uninterrupted consciousness might attach our future too logically to our past, might prevent becoming. Night and sleep alone permit metamorphoses; without oblivion in the chrysalis, the caterpillar could not become a butterfly. The hope of awaking someone else urges me to let the man I am sink into sleep.

It is not going to paradise myself, but leading you there that matters to me. What unbearable happiness if one had to enjoy it alone. . . .

And what can be said of a happiness that is achieved only at the expense of another!

Berlin

It is fashionable to admire Vermeer above all others. The Vermeer of the Berlin Museum does not strike me as superior to the Pieter de Hoogh that flanks it, which, as far as I am concerned, I even believe I prefer.

By Govaert Flinck, a very delectable female nude. Very different qualities from those I used to admire in that extraordinary *Goldsmith's Family* in the Brussels Museum, which was long attributed to him.²⁵

Wonderful landscape filled with ponds, by Ruysdael. How slight and frail the Hobbemas appear by comparison!

The most beaten paths are certainly the surest; but do not hope to scare up much game on them.

²⁵ See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 13.

Berlin, 18 May

It was Barrès who made it fashionable. That need of looking for a lesson, a "message" everywhere and constantly is intolerable to me. Vassalage that debases the mind. Great works do not so much teach us as they plunge us into a sort of almost loving bewilderment. I compare those who are everywhere seeking their advantage to those prostitutes who, before giving themselves, ask: "How much is your little gift?"

At once my only desire is to get away.

I should like to enjoy this summer flower by flower, as if it were to be the last one for me.

Fish die belly-upward and rise to the surface; it is their way of falling.

Cuverville, Thursday, 30 May

Read *La Prisonnière*²⁶ in the train. I write this morning to Bourdet, whose *Sexe faible* I had seen with considerable amusement last Monday.

Found at the Librairie Gallimard the little pamphlet (*Nouveaux Cahiers de la quinzaine*) that is devoted to me, and which had not been sent me. If I had been at that meeting, I should not have kept from replying to Maxence's attack.²⁷

Nothing is more intolerable to me than false quotations. With them one can make an author say whatever one wants. M. Maxence, by attributing to me the anecdote of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (which moreover he completely falsifies; when he says: "a Russian writer quoted the anecdote to me," is not this tantamount to confessing that he has not read the book and that his opinion is based merely on second-hand information?), reminds me of Lombroso, who concluded from Baudelaire's prose poem *Le Mauvais Vitrier* that the poet was very cruel.²⁸

²⁶ Edouard Bourdet's play, *The Captive*, deals with the problem of a Lesbian wife. *Le Sexe faible* was entitled *The Sex Fable* in New York.

²⁷ In the debate on André Gide that took place at the Studio Franco-Russe on 25 March 1930, Louis Martin-Chauffier and Georges Adamovitch spoke at length. Jean Maxence accused Gide of cruelty and of a humanism that excludes God. The debate was published by the *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, series 20, cahier 6.

²⁸ In "The Bad Glazier," one of the *Little Poems in Prose*, Baudelaire relates the experience of forcing a glazier, with his heavy load of glass, to climb five flights of stairs only to be told his services were not needed and then have a flowerpot dropped on him as he issued from the front door. A glorification of the satisfaction to be derived from yielding to a momentary im-

But I note this in his declaration: "Nietzsche is an adversary who touches me deeply because, in his very refusal, he is suffering." Yes, that is it; and Charlie Du Bos likewise; what they blame me for is not being unhappy. In their eyes happiness is the greatest crime, or at least the greatest misfortune of a soul, when that happiness is not achieved through their means.

Let us remember the name of Georges Adamovitch. No one has spoken more intelligently of my books than he (at the Franco-Russian meeting of 25 March 1930, which was reported in the *Cahiers de la quinzaine* of 5 April).

A great confusion came from the fact that people wanted to find a personal profession of faith in every statement of my heroes, however diverse and contradictory those heroes might be. And this was all the more tempting since originally I had been denied all creative talent. I was incapable of getting away, of detaching myself, from myself, it was said, and in each creature I animated my resemblance was looked for. This also allowed people to think that fundamentally I was never very sincere. I came to understand that *objective depiction* often means a superficial representation; but, for a profound depiction, the poet must experiment in himself what is to be the subject of his picture. And Browning does not exactly confess himself in *Bishop Blougram*, in *Sludge*, in *Andrea del Sarto*, to be sure — yet in order to discover the form of those characters, his elastic soul deigns to identify itself in turn with each of them for a time. And since one cannot really understand a feeling without experiencing it oneself, I submit that he depicts himself, if one admits that he becomes in turn each of them.

Not that I have not taken my stand on many points; or rather that I was forced to take that stand. But as soon as I am inhabited by a character to whom "my noble poetic faculty" (as Mallarmé said) obliges me to give life, I owe myself to him and have no opinion of my own. I am with him. I am him. I let myself be led by him where I should not have gone by myself — whether this character be the Immoralist, or Alissa, or Candaules, or Saul, or the minister of my *Symphonie pastorale*, or the Édouard of Les Faux-Monnayeurs, or Éveline, or Lafcadio.²⁹

I read in Euripides' *Phœnissæ*, translated by Leconte de Lisle (p. 195): "*Ils ont très irrité le malheureux homme*," which strikes me as inadmissible. Or am I being excessively puristic here?³⁰

"*Ont irrité*" is here only the tense of a verb, a past participle conju-

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pulse, the poem is more likely inspired by Poe's *Imp of the Perverse* than by actual experience.

<sup>29</sup> See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, pp. 306, 326, 392.

<sup>30</sup> Literally: "They have very annoyed the unfortunate man."

gated with its auxiliary, and can no more take the comparative or superlative than the plural.

Errors in logic always seem to me the most serious. As for the "*se rappeler de*" and "*causer à quelqu'un*," willy-nilly we shall be forced to come to them.<sup>31</sup>

2 June

Em. and Mlle Zaglad are speaking of hospitals and the scandalous abuses committed in them, of the bad food served to the invalids, of the injustices, the favors, and the easy blackmail that nurses and orderlies exercise over the unfortunate patients. But whoever denounced these abuses would play into the hands of the political left, and this is why people are so often silent. Meanwhile that fear of the hospital which is so often encountered in the masses seems, alas, only too justified.

I remember that one day, on my way to see my poor niece shortly before her end, I took a taxi.

"To the hospital in rue Boileau," I say to the driver. He asks me:

"What number?"

"I don't know. But you must know it. . . . After all! — the hospital. . . ."

Then, turning round and in a tone of voice that mingled hatred, scorn, irony, and rancor:

"For us, it's Lariboisière."<sup>32</sup>

And these innocent syllables, pronounced with the drawl of the Paris street-urchin, took on the ring of a death-knell.

"Go on!" I told him. "People die in private hospitals just the same as in the wards."

But his remark had sent a cold shiver down my back.

4 June

My mind altogether concerned with the bad news of Jean-Paul, whom I am eager to go and see in Arcachon . . . while there is still time.<sup>33</sup>

I too often wait for the sentence to have finished taking shape in me before writing it. It is best to take it by the end that first offers

<sup>31</sup> *Se souvenir de* and *se rappeler*, both meaning "to remember," are often confused. *Causer*, meaning "to chat," is coming more and more to be vulgarly used in all the senses of *parler*.

<sup>32</sup> The Hôpital Lariboisière is a large public hospital near the Gare du Nord, whereas André Gide was going to a small private hospital in fashionable Passy.

<sup>33</sup> Jean-Paul Allégret, then suffering from the tuberculosis from which he eventually died.

itself, head or foot, without yet knowing the rest; then to pull; the rest will follow along.

I have been told that X. was not completely satisfied with his new state of grace, that he remained unhappy, restless, that St. Thomas had disappointed him, that he found merely categories, a mystic card-file and abstractions, where he had hoped to find contact, and that today he inclined rather toward St. Bonaventure. It must be added that he came to conversion (so it is said) through a great desire and need to approach the beyond, the suprasensible, and to communicate with the realm of souls, particularly with his dead parents. For a long time he apparently indulged in spiritualism, knocking on tables and questioning spirits. Maritain, aware of the situation and always lying in wait, wanted to tackle him. In short, X. became a Thomist. But I believe he got the wrong Thomas. The one he should have had was the other, the Thomas who, before believing, first had to touch.

#### 6 June

This will perhaps not last much longer (and I keep telling myself this), but I feel more in possession of my faculties, it seems to me, than I have ever been. I also believe that my memory (which was not very good) is better. But what is diminishing is that sort of inner pressure and ardor, that tormenting need to embrace, which as I sometimes feared, might have led me to crime, or to madness. I am not yet so tempered, however, that on certain days I do not still frighten myself.

#### 7 June

Aldous Huxley is very intelligent; but one feels that he met his problems along his way. He did not himself, and painfully, give birth to them.

#### 9 June

Returned these last few days to several études by Chopin long forsaken (the two in A flat particularly, tenth in the first book and first in the second) because, and probably wrongly, they seemed to me less valuable and, besides, more banal in their charm. Amazed by what Jachimecki says of the first of them and also Hans von Bulow, whom he quotes: "Whoever can play this étude in a really perfect manner can flatter himself that he has achieved the greatest height in the Parnassus of piano-playing, for it is perhaps the most difficult in the whole collection." Etc. — A crafty difficulty that one can overcome only after having completely understood it. Greatly worked over likewise, to get it to the same point, the one in F major (third in the second book), so exquisite in its mysterious simplicity, and so important to achieve that particular suppleness and delicacy of the wrist demanded by Chopin's

technique and unsuspected by Bach and even by Beethoven and Mozart. This music of Chopin calls upon qualities so special and so contrary to those demanded by the works of Bach that, turning at once to the Great Fugue in B minor for organ (by memory, since I have not Liszt's book here, but I have the delight of still recalling it perfectly), I had some trouble playing it well, and it seemed to me that I had turned far back into the past. The result of which is that this morning I abandon Chopin to get back to *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*; with some difficulty and, consequently, great advantage.

It requires a great effort to convince myself that I am now as old as those who seemed to me so old when I was young.

21 June

Arrived here (Challes-les-Eaux) the morning of the 18th; went at once to see Dr. Mathieu and began my treatment that very evening. Throat-washes (which provoke in me a spasmodic trembling of the uvula) and inhalations, nasal and throat sprays which leave one exasperated and eyes popping from one's head. But it indubitably does me good.

Read with great interest Bennett's *Journal 1929* and without pleasure the insignificant *Mémoires de l'ogre*<sup>34</sup> by Cassou.

Done in by a three hours' climb in the mountains under a hot sun. This no longer suits my age, alas! Above all, I was not in training.

I am succeeding in suppressing crescendos from my playing. Indeed, one must have them for Beethoven; there are none in Bach's clavichord; and Chopin gets along without them to advantage. There are *fortes* and *pianos*, but this is not the same thing. Displeasing.

22 June

Of the incestuous character of Barrès's theories: according to him, you should not, you could not, really love anyone who was not of your own blood.

Barrès (the second volume of whose *Mes Cahiers* I am reading at this moment with an assiduous exasperation) seems to have been worried by Chopin's Nancy origins on the paternal side of the family. (I have written a few pages on this subject that I must find and develop.) He points out the fact (p. 182), then immediately drops it. What a wonderful contradiction of all his theories! And likewise Claude Gelée, called *le Lorrain*!

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<sup>34</sup> *Memoirs of the Ogre.*

This is perhaps the most touching, most moving thing in all Barrès: his obstinate perseverance in the absurd.

But perhaps his liana-like thought needed that vine trellis to climb upward:

"... laws of human production. We *know* notably that the individual's energy is the sum of the souls of the dead behind him and that that sum can be achieved only through the permanence of the earthly influence." (Page 93).

And he is naïve enough to add:

"This is one of those fundamental ideas which are almost enough to establish the fecundity of a mind, *so rich are they in applications.*"

And, in fact, his whole intellectual effort consisted in applying that theory to individual cases.

It cannot exactly be said that that theory is false; but, like all theories, after a short time and once they have accomplished the little progress they were capable of allowing the mind, it ceases to invite the mind to anything but indolence and soon works toward preventing its development.

And suddenly this surprising confession (p. 192):

"Can I sincerely say that I love Lorraine? . . ."<sup>35</sup>

"... But my life that does not belong to her is penetrated, perhaps confiscated by her. I do not know whether or not I love her; having entered me through suffering, *she has become one of the means of my development.*"

It cannot be better expressed; he reveals himself here to be oddly perspicacious. And further on (p. 215):

"I did not come to love Lorraine easily. (The customs in Lorraine are always *shabby* [page 190].) At the age of ten, at twenty, at thirty, I looked upon myself as an exile. . . . I did not cease to desire the Orient. With experience I came to see that *in those countries I loved only the land of the dead*, cemeteries, reveries, the place of dreams and of mystery, etc. . . ."

And again:

"In the beginning I did not love her. I began to like her when I began to realize that she had her dead" (p. 237).

As if every country did not have them!

"And moreover this is a reply to: *what is the good of it*" (p. 238).

The need of creating that factitious interest and of artificially establishing his pose is born in Barrès of the profound awareness of his poverty. No real, essential problem in him; no "figure in the carpet."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> What he really loves is Toledo, Venice, Constantinople, Astiné Aravian, Asia. [A.] Astiné Aravian is an Armenian woman who figures prominently in *Les Déracinés* (*The Uprooted*) by Barrès.

<sup>36</sup> Gide uses Henry James's title in English.

He must invent it; otherwise he would have nothing to say. Whence that keen sense of the abyss, of emptiness, of death, that need of "withdrawing to his minima" (p. 236).

At Cuverville I had read rather much, and with great appetite: the latest Mauriac (in installments in the *Revue de Paris*), *Demian* by Hesse (in translation), Jouhandeau's remarkable *Parricide imaginaire*; unable to get interested in *Babbitt*; then everything concerning Delphi in the *Greek History* of Curtius (Vol. II). Reread with very great joy the first book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in German. For the seventh or eighth time (at least), attempted *Also sprach Zarathustra*.<sup>37</sup> IMPOS-  
SIBLE. The tone of this book is unbearable to me. And all my admiration for Nietzsche cannot succeed in making me put up with it. Finally, it seems to me slightly supererogatory in his work; it would assume importance only if all the other books did not exist. I constantly feel him here to be jealous of Christ, anxious to give the world a book that can be read *as the Gospel is read*. If this book has become more famous than all the others of Nietzsche, it is because, basically, it is a *novel*. But, for this very reason, he addresses himself to the lowest class of his readers: those who still need a myth. And what I especially like in Nietzsche is his hatred of fiction.

23 June

The *Scènes de la vie future* by the excellent Duhamel, which I am finishing, leaves me very dissatisfied.<sup>38</sup> A few lines in his preface had made me hope for more. If Americanism triumphs and if, later on, when Americanism has triumphed, his book is consulted, I fear it will appear childish. A higher individualism must wish for the standardization of the masses. What is to be deplored is that America is stopping at the first stage. But is she stopping? Thanks to her, humanity is beginning to glimpse new problems, to develop under a new sky. — A sky devoid of stars?<sup>9</sup> . . . No, but whose stars we have not yet managed to discover.

In *Le Démon de midi*,<sup>39</sup> a remarkable sentence that Bourget puts into the mouth of his Dom Bayle:

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<sup>37</sup> Mauriac's "latest" was probably the novel *Ce qui était perdu* (*What was Lost*), which, like Jouhandeau's *Imaginary Parricide*, came out in 1930; *Babbitt* is of course Sinclair Lewis's novel; *Truth and Poetry* is by Goethe, and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* by Nietzsche.

<sup>38</sup> *America the Menace*, as this harsh judgment of American mechanized civilization was called in English, originally came out in 1930.

<sup>39</sup> *The Demon of Middle Life*, a novel by Paul Bourget, appeared in 1914.

"All hypocrites began by having the virtues of which they preserve the mark." (Vol. II, p. 13.)

He writes: "They *were* agreed that . . ." I don't remember just where in the first volume. But in the second (p. 217, little three-franc edition), carried away by his story and paying less attention to himself: "They *had* agreed" which is perhaps wrong, but surely more natural.

His constant references to sacred texts are often hugely comical.

I am full of consideration for this book and deem that the important position occupied by Bourget is in no way usurped. It is even not so hastily written as I thought. There are no deficiencies in the workmanship, or psychological errors; the remarks are always correct and often subtly discerning. But when, leaving *Le Démon de midi* for a moment, I go back to Goethe, I feel at once (and I didn't need this comparison to feel it) how high above the Bourget hillock rise the mountains of real Parnassus. He is not a part of the vast range whose summits, for eternal snow, are always inhumanly bare. Doubtless he congratulates himself on providing up to the very top nothing but arable lands, but I do not think that what is harvested on him long remains very edible. The appetite for his products will pass with his epoch; that utilitarian art is good for but a time and, as soon as it ceases to be useful, arouses no other interest than a historical curiosity. Even the "serious" aspect of his work evokes smiles, and that absence of irony toward himself will soon invite, already invites, the reader's irony. Nothing so decrepit as serious works. Not Molière, nor Cervantes, nor Pascal even is serious; they are sober. If *Les Provinciales* were serious, no one would read them any more.<sup>40</sup> And the *serious* part of Bossuet's work is precisely that which is no longer current. Yes, I believe that Bourget will seem utterly obsolete in twenty years (let us say fifty).

But he makes me realize what a success I could have had with my *Faux-Monnayeurs* if I had been willing to develop my picture somewhat. The extreme conciseness of my notations does not leave the superficial reader time enough to become involved. This book calls for a slow reading and meditation that are not ordinarily granted at once. People do not take the time to read a new book; they skim through it. But if the book is worth going back to, then it is that one really discovers it.

I took care to indicate only the significant, the decisive, the indispensable; to avoid everything that was "taken for granted" and where the intelligent reader could fill in for himself (this is what I call the *collaboration of the reader*). Bourget spares us nothing. But the reader is grateful to him for this.

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<sup>40</sup> Pascal's *Letters to a Provincial*, though religious polemic, is full of clever irony.



"Yes, the average reader, the lazy reader. . . ."

But I recognize that this stretching of the story allows the reader to keep contact with the characters over a greater surface. The atmosphere, unless it is too abstract, is filled in. At times I tell myself that a too constant anxiety for art, a rather empty anxiety (but spontaneous and irresistible) made me muffle *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*; that if I had deigned to depict in a somewhat conventional and banal way, but thereby allowing a more immediate approval on the part of readers, I should have increased their number extraordinarily; in short, that I "stretched my nets too high," as Stendhal said, much too high. But flying fish are the only ones to interest me; and as for catching schools of sardines, whittings, or mackerels . . . I am just as happy to leave the advantage to others. I write only for those who know how to take a hint.

The "verisimilitude" (I believe his word is *vraisemblabilité*) in Bourget is perfect. A disciple of Balzac, he is firmly fixed in reality. He never gets stuck in it as I should surely do if I tried to venture there.

My *reality* always remains slightly fantastic. After all, I never succeed in completely believing in it (any more than in life) and have never been able to subscribe to Gautier's remark: "The artist is a man for whom the outer world exists." How much more often the artist, always somewhat of a mystic, is he who does not believe, not completely, in the reality (in the *single* reality, at least) of the outer world.

Jean Prévost; cantankerous. Bad, for a novelist who flatters himself that he knows men, always to make them, at one's first approach, withdraw and close up.

As for me, I am well aware that I run the risk of being considered flattering and obsequious since my first care, in the company of almost anyone, is to say what will put him most at ease and invite him to unfold, one after the other, all his petals.

Often very disappointing!

29 June

It is certain that my love for Em. has greatly withheld my thought; but, forcing it constantly to consider what it left behind and yet would have wished to follow along, I believe that thought gained in depth and breadth what it lost in sharpness and impetus. Moreover, I am not even sure that I should have felt a sufficient need to write such works as *Corydon*<sup>41</sup> or the second part of *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . unless I

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<sup>41</sup> *Corydon* is formed of four Socratic dialogues on homosexuality; *If It Die* . . . is Gide's memoirs, often touching on the same subject.

had been pushed on by so vexing a clash. There is hardly a day on which I do not feel checked by *my* love, by *her* thought.

30 June

Twenty minutes of inhalation, twice a day. Mortal!

"What do you think of while you are under the steam?"

"Of all sorts of things; of death, of my brother Joseph. . . ."

"But I thought you didn't have a brother."

"Oh, that doesn't keep me from thinking of him!"

To abstain through virtue is perfect; but too often fear also held her back; as soon as the grass was a bit deep, she dared not venture onto the lawn. "*Latet anguis in herba.*"<sup>42</sup>

I saved this morning (or tried to save, for I believe I intervened too late) an unfortunate toad that some children had discovered and put to torture. It had fallen into an opening in front of an air-vent of the bathhouse. It was hardly stirring, stunned by the stones that had been thrown at it. A six- or seven-year-old boy led me to it; he had witnessed the operation, and as soon as he saw that I was taking the toad's side, showed great zeal in telling on a playmate. I found the latter a bit later and tried to make him feel some shame; he was a little fellow about ten years old with curly blond hair like St. John, the cherubic type, neither more stupid nor more vicious than another and brought up by parents neither more stupid nor more vicious than he. I spoke at some length and as best I could. There were five or six kids there listening to me, boys and girls in whose eyes I must have seemed a harmless type of lunatic. Only the little fellow in whose presence I had tried to save the toad, taking it out of the hole and carefully carrying it to a shady spot where I felt it to be really safe, he alone seemed rather sensitive, almost moved by the care he saw me taking; but he was no longer there. A little later I heard him telling the others, with many details, everything I had done, which must have seemed very ridiculous to those others.

I observe intently and at length these very young children of people who come here for the treatment. What conceit, boasting, and stupidity! And behind them one feels all the silliness of the parents, and their deplorable upbringing.

Dr. Mathieu and his wife, charming people for whom I feel a real affection, took me yesterday to the Grande Chartreuse in their auto. In 1889 I went only as far as Saint-Pierre-de-Chartreuse, out of *André-Walterism*; that was the period when I kept from touching what I most wanted. This amounted to plowing up the field for the demon, and

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<sup>42</sup> "A snake lies hidden in the grass," from Virgil: *Eclogues*, III, 93.

already sowing fine regrets for later on! Some days the memory of all I did not do and might have done obsesses me.

The doctor considered quite natural this expression which has become very common: "a general paralytic." Impossible to find at once analogies to bring out the oddness of it; I finally ask him if he would say likewise: an intermittent fever patient, a galloping consumptive, an intestinal tubercular . . . ?

I read in the *Journal* of 29 June under Paul Morand's signature: "This proposal and its effects so struck me!" Indefensible and most shocking, at least to my ear. In the same article this remarkable final sentence: ". . . a pendulum passes the center twice as often as it touches the extremities" (he means "each extremity") — which delights me.

2 July

Finished a very interesting and convincing study on *J.-J. Rousseau's Malady* that I had sent for. The author reduces everything to the fact that he did not pass his urine, whence slow poisoning of the blood, etc.

I recall that after the birth of R. P. the nurse came to tell the father that the baby "pissed awry."

"I don't give a damn, if only he thinks straight," exclaimed the father with perhaps more humor than wisdom.

3 July

The only drama that really interests me and that I should always be willing to depict anew is the debate of the individual with whatever keeps him from being authentic, with whatever is opposed to his integrity, to his integration. Most often the obstacle is within him. And all the rest is merely accidental.

6 July

Pin, who cannot be suspected of any lack of understanding in regard to my writings, but rather of indulgence, told me of his indignation on reading in my *Retour du Tchad* the disrespectful way in which I speak of *La Mort du loup*.<sup>43</sup> He told me that all domestic animals bellow when killed and that, if I had been a hunter, I should have been struck by the silent agony of wild animals. He went so far as to make me regret having written those lines.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> In Vigny's famous poem *The Death of the Wolf*, men are urged to suffer and die in silence as the wolf does. Gide had argued that wild animals are not necessarily silent at the moment of death.

<sup>44</sup> In regard to this paragraph Marcel de Coppet, then Governor of the Chad, wrote me:

7 July

Outline of a sermon:

But the full embrace of Truth, my brothers, is refused us; and moreover it would give our soul a less keen satisfaction than its pursuit, just as free access to a naked body often disappoints the hand that took such delight in slipping between flesh and frock. . . .

8 July

No, indeed, I cannot accept those providential and pre-established harmonies such as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre saw; but I believe that everything tends toward a certain harmonious disposition, for the simple reason that what is not somewhat harmonious cannot survive; so that, everywhere, compensations, substitutions, etc., re-establish a threatened equilibrium.

No people had greater sense and understanding of harmony than the Greeks. Harmony of the individual, and of manners, and of the city. And it is from a need for harmony (intelligence as much as instinct) that they admitted uranism. This is what I tried to bring out in *Corydon*. This book will be understood later on, when it is first understood that a large share of the upset of our society and our dissolute morals come from this: that we try to banish uranism, which is indispensable to the constitution of a well-regulated society.

12 July

*Nach Berlin*; since Em. writes that she prefers not to see me in Cuverville before the 16th.

. . . Doubting somewhat of his own reality, he remains tormented, without knowing it, by the need of putting it to the test. Feels himself living in the conditional.

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Paris, 20 June 1932

DEAR FRIEND,

Many wild animals do not die in silence: the lion and the leopard roar; many antilopes, and particularly gazelles, bleat plaintively; the rhinoceros squeaks (a faint mouse's squeak, extraordinary from such a big carcass); our African hares cry out too; jackals, bush-dogs bark and howl. Is it from pain? Is it from fear of a new wound or of death? That is another question; but they do not keep silent in their agony.

Nor the buffalo (which I was forgetting) either.

I have never killed any wolves.

Yours,

COPPET [A.]

13 July

The closer I approach death, the weaker becomes fear of death. I hold that fear in great scorn as soon as I feel it being played up, as soon as the artist yields to it and delights in it. It has always seemed to me that the first virtue of man was knowing how to face death; and it is a lamentable thing to see it less feared by very young men than by those who ought to be, if not tired of life, at least, having lived, resigned to death.

"Let the dead bury their dead." There is not a single word of Christ to which the so-called Christian religion has paid less attention.

In the train

While I am skimming through Maurois's disappointing *Relativisme*, a young Finnish girl beside me is reading his *Aspects de la biographie*⁴⁵ with pencil in hand. At intervals the pencil descends: the Finnish girl has probably recognized one of her own thoughts, one of those to which I long ago said farewell.

No, I do not like disorder; but I am exasperated by those who shout: "Don't move," when no one is yet in place.

Melville speaks (*Moby Dick*, chapter lxxxvii or lxxxviii according to the edition) of "schools" of young female cachalots presided over by a single male, master sultan of this harem, who keeps off the other males. The "schools" of young males are larger, he says, than the schools of females. Boisterous and similar, he says, to unruly groups of Yale or Harvard college students. Those males, more numerous than the females and one of whom will appropriate and monopolize the women altogether, those excluded males with no access to the gynæceum, what do they do? What will they become?

Can it be that I am the first person to ask this simple question? Can it be that I am the only one? Can it be that the question is answered only by laughter; or not at all?

14 July

Never have I been able to settle in life. Always seated askew, as if on the arm of a chair; ready to get up, to leave.

21 July

At Cuverville two days now. Frightful weather.

Piano completely out of tune as a result of replacing some strings. In the whole region not a single young and handsome creature to

⁴⁵ *Relativism* (1930) and *Aspects of Biography* (1928) are both essays.

smile at, to look upon. Languor. Torpor. I am smoking too much. I should read all day long if my eyes did not become tired readily and if I were not trying to give to *Cedipe* the hours in which I feel most lucid; but without fervor.

I enjoying chatting with Edmond, our gardener; but he is getting old; he complains of pains, of itchings, of sleeplessness.

"What about your appetite?"

"Oh, my appetite's still good. That's what I said to the doctor: 'When I am dead, I'll still eat.' — 'You old rascal!' he said to me."

I have just finished the wonderful *Moby Dick*.

22 July

X. told me he had recently met Franz Blei in Berlin. The old bohemian still seems extraordinarily hale and hearty; and when X. congratulated him on this, Blei, leaning toward him, whispered:

"I'll tell you my secret: *No sports!*"

24 July

Rather hasty reading (but it is not worth more) of Zola's *Lourdes*. A book constructed in this way calls for the method of "*Nulla dies sine linea*."⁴⁶

Immediately afterward I plunge back into Walter Pater's *Greek Studies* and *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, taking up, at Goethe's invitation, the wonderful story of *Genesis*, of which he gives such a remarkable summary.

Finished the dialogue between Eteocles and Polynices for the second act of my *Cedipe*, but do not yet know whether I can consider myself satisfied with it.

25 July

I believe that illnesses are the keys that can open certain doors for us. I believe that there are certain doors that only illness can open. There is a certain state of health that does not allow us to understand everything; and perhaps illness shuts us off from certain truths; but health shuts us off just as effectively from others, or turns us away from them so that we are not concerned with them.

I have never met one of those who boast of never having been ill who was not, in some way or other, a bit stupid; like those who have never traveled; and I remember that Charles-Louis Philippe very prettily called illnesses the poor man's travels.

Those who have never been ill are incapable of real sympathy for a great many misfortunes.

⁴⁶ "Not a day without a line."

One workman says to another: "*Fais attention de te blesser.*"⁴⁷ This is an error; but I have often heard it, and not only in Normandy. "*Fais attention de tomber,*" a mother says to her child; "*Fais attention de manquer le train,*" etc. . . .⁴⁸ An error repeated in this way runs a great risk of becoming usage. The "*faire attention de ne pas*" is bothersome — and "*prends garde*" has long done without the negative; it will soon be thus with "*faire attention de.*"

I cannot open one of my books without finding exasperating misprints. Just today, in *Le Voyage au Congo*, I discover "*pris à parti*" without the *e*.⁴⁹ And it just happens to be in a passage directed against Clément Vautel, who, if he saw it, must have gloated over it.

28 July

Read considerably the last few days: some Walter Pater (*Greek Studies*) and Goethe (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*); many of Mme de Sévigné's letters, the fourth book of Herodotus; reread *Genesis*, beginning with chapter xii.

29 July

The piano-tuner finally came yesterday from Fécamp. He is a poor dear man, appropriately blind, accompanied by the woman who has become his wife. I feel that he takes great pleasure in chatting. He asks me to give him a theme of a few notes, on which he immediately improvises brilliant flourishes, to my surprise rather substantial; then takes up the theme contrapuntally in a way that draws from me many compliments, which he enjoys thoroughly. Blind people who are not musicians are really to be pitied; but he lives in that world of sounds, which is linked to the eternal world, with that sort of almost mystical serenity of blind men — which inclines one to think that God can be more closely approached through hearing than through sight and that forms have less transparency than sounds.

Sheltered from the sight of so much ugliness and misfortune, they escape more easily into an imaginary harmony, more easily achieved. I did not make the most of this in my *Symphonie pastorale*.⁵⁰

Traubel, in his *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, quotes a very beautiful letter from John Addington Symonds. Whitman (but who, per-

⁴⁷ "Take care to hurt yourself" instead of "Take care not to hurt yourself."

⁴⁸ Literally, "Take care to fall" and "Take care to miss the train."

⁴⁹ The expression *pris à partie* means "took to task" whereas "*pris le parti de*" would mean "resolved" or "decided."

⁵⁰ The heroine of Gide's *Pastoral Symphony* is the blind Gertrude; originally he had intended calling the tale *The Blind One*.

haps, did not dare speak out to Traubel) seems embarrassed by the too precise interpretations to which his *Calamus* can lend itself. And I can understand moreover that he prefers to let each reader discover in it what he likes.

Read yesterday the wonderful fifth canto of the *Lusiad*.⁵¹
Went far ahead in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

I cling to this notebook as if it were to console me for the slow growth of my *Cedipe*. How much easier it is to work according to an accepted æsthetic and ethic! Writers who are submissive to a recognized religion advance sure of every step. I owe it to myself to invent everything. At times it is an immense groping toward an almost imperceptible light. And at times I ask myself: what is the good of it?

They must, of necessity, consider my books vicious, and vicious the lesson they teach, since those books do not reflect their tendencies, since that lesson does not lead in their direction. And the more vicious, the more successful they are, the more convincing; and the more necessary it consequently appears to them to combat them.

1 August

I go to buy some cigarettes at Criquetot.

The sight of that ordinary little village (moreover so exactly similar to many others in the region), each time I return to it, saddens me. What insufficient regard for hygiene, for comfort, for well-being, for gaiety! (Skillful gradation in the choice of words.) A sort of sordid economy seems to have dictated the placing and the contracting of the houses, in which no one but equally sordid people could achieve a semblance of happiness, in which any aspiration toward betterment is condemned to languish miserably. Everything there is ugly, shabby, set. No public garden, no place except the café to gather in on Sunday; no song, no game, show, or music; no invitation to get away for a minute from one's work and one's most selfish interests. There are few towns in which one feels less happy to be alive, despite its relative prosperity. And I think with melancholy of those new villages that I saw in Germany, where everything seems attractive, houses and people. . . .

Little François D., whom I question about what he is going to do now that he has received his school diploma, tells me that he wanted to continue studying to become a school-teacher (his mother wanted to hire him out as a farm-hand). Immense desire to help him, which immediately filled my heart and made tears come to my eyes. . . .

⁵¹ The Portuguese epic by Luiz Vaz de Camoëns.

How can I express that urge in a way that will not immediately seem ridiculous to me? I think that those who in their writings readily voice "good sentiments" are not really moved by them in a very pathetic and profound way. Most often the charity they express is but a superficial philanthropy. They would fail to find words to express it if they were completely upset by it.

It was also because I foresaw the superhuman difficulties the little fellow would encounter when trying to rise a bit above his original condition. . . .

Out of eight children in that family only one seems to have "gone bad." The father, who had long been a laborer and with whom I used to go frequently to chat since he had been laid up by illness, died last year of cancer, after months of frightful suffering. He was a sort of muzhik, a rebellious fellow greatly tormented by a persecution-mania, who poisoned his existence whenever he judged that he had not got his due from his neighbor or from the government. Day and night he ruminated on the injustices he claimed to have suffered, and all the help one could give him meant less to him than the least centime of which he thought he had been cheated. Illness had cast a considerable gloom over his mind. I had for him the sort of friendship that, in the whole township, I now feel only for our old Edmond, who, moreover, liked him very much and endured listening tirelessly to all his complaints, realizing full well that D. was not always in possession of his wits. The other people hereabouts scarcely liked him; he had a touchy character and was ill inclined to mingle.

Edmond, our gardener, has for some time now slept badly. His rheumatism gives him pain, and some nervous worry, almost moral in nature, keeps him awake. His numerous children are nevertheless all healthy and happy; their new families are prospering; he has always done his best; but this simple, honest soul always fears falling beneath his task, having forgotten something, being in arrears. And when he goes to sleep at once, worn out by his day's work, he wakes up well before dawn, much too early, gets up, goes back to bed, and tosses.

"It's partly the birds that wake me up when they begin to squawk," he says to his wife. She protests:

"But, Edmond, birds don't *squawk*, they sing." Then she adds: "And don't you think it's wonderful that they are always happy?" Whereupon he, grumpily:

"Well, there's no denying that *they* are lucky, at least!"

2 August

There are certain things one does *by forcing oneself*.⁵² And I am not speaking here of the effort to realize oneself, but rather of an effort that

⁵² Such as, for example, writing the pages I set down last night. [A.]

tends to falsify one's development. That effort to get yourself to do an act which is not natural to you (whether for good or for evil) is most disturbing. I can explain it only by a certain hatred of your own limits that sometimes comes to you. Such inconsistent *irrelevancies* are most costly; they immediately become very apparent, for they stand out and are almost always of much more *relevant* importance than everything that belongs to and is lost in the ordinary course of life. At first the person is not completely involved in it, but that extremity of oneself that was first to venture alone in it soon runs the risk of dragging all the rest along. This would be a strangely interesting subject for a novel.

Noteworthy that the fatal *irresponsible* acts of Conrad's heroes (I am thinking particularly of *Lord Jim* and of *Under Western Eyes*) are involuntary and immediately stand seriously in the way of the one who commits them. A whole lifetime, afterward, is not enough to give them the lie and to efface their mark.

Yet I shall not tear out the pages I wrote yesterday while forcing myself; but I dislike them (1) because I am obliged to confess that my generosity was mixed with a not very sublime ardor; (2) the depreciation of others' generous feelings in order to play off mine the more strikes me as at least useless.

To return to the first point, I must add however that my feeling almost immediately lost whatever physical impulse it first had, and, by itself, purified itself so to speak, so that there remained in me—as often happens in such cases—nothing but an ardent desire to do charity. I believe moreover that there is no real charity that does not absorb and dominate in itself the sensual possibilities of our nature. That charity does not remain abstract; the participation of the senses, far from debasing it, fills it out and enriches it. Whence its high temperature. Whence also the fact that it inclines to chastity even more than constraint does. I have no use for a frozen charity that freezes even those it obliges.

3 August

Yesterday went to Angerville to see Lechevalier, who used to be school-teacher at Cuverville, to ask his advice about little François D. The best would probably be to get him, in October, into the school of Montivilliers, which takes boarders. Lechevalier is to write to the headmaster. I have promised to be responsible for all the expenses if, as he intimates, it is already too late to get a scholarship for this first year.

M. Lechevalier, who has been rather cold to me for the last three years, became sweet as honey at the first compliments I paid him about the Criquetot library he administers and for which I recently had sent

some twenty volumes, among which the series of *Les Thibault*, *Un Homme heureux*, and *Les Frères Bouquinquant*.⁵³ His self-esteem, years ago, had been hurt by a letter from my Uncle Charles (which I was unwise enough to show him) pointing out the inacceptability of the conclusions in his report on the large families of Cuverville that I had asked him to draw up. Not feeling in a position to contradict my uncle, he quite naturally felt some bitterness about this — and even more bitterness still if, going over his figures, he had been obliged to recognize that he had made a mistake. He who has risen alone, slowly, and painfully, brooks less patiently than anyone else being disputed and having an inch taken off his stature. Yesterday, since I was bringing him a real pedestal, he exulted. I was delighted.

In the latest *Candide*,⁵⁴ which Jacques brought us yesterday from Paris, a diverting article by Montfort (it is a long time since I had read anything by him) on Catulle Mendès. Montfort is of the opinion that people “do not do justice” to that sorry poet, so happily forgotten (happily for us and for him). It is hard to understand today the extraordinary celebrity he achieved in his lifetime.⁵⁵ Then he spread out everywhere; he reigned supreme; he debased everything his pen touched, and it claimed to touch everything. Fortunately I encountered him but very rarely; yet the last glimpse I had of him remains unforgettable. It was in a theater lobby during an intermission. He had on his arm an enormous tart, wearing a frightfully low-necked gown (for the epoch), who was simpering and manipulating her fan; he himself, in evening dress, was strutting, thrusting out his pot belly, throwing back his head, which suggested a Christ for brothels. He was wearing a low, wide-winged collar, from which cascaded a soft white silk tie; his long blond hair made a dull halo; his languishing and insipid eyes glanced from under heavy, half-closed lids. The couple was so large, so voluminous, that it blocked the passage. Not being known to him, I was able to stand there looking at him. Both of them seemed boneless, soft, and as if covered with Vaseline. They gave off an extraordinary scent of eau de Cologne or Lubin water, of toilet water, of library paste, of the bed, and of cigarette butts. Young men kept rushing up and bowing before this Moloch. It is impossible to see, or to fancy, anything more shameful.

Montfort quotes one of his remarks which bears witness, he claims, “to an extraordinary humility”: “If I had not been a Jew, I would have

⁵³ *The World of the Thibaults* is Roger Martin du Gard's novel in eleven volumes, then still incomplete; *A Happy Man* is a novel by Jean Schlumberger, and *The Bouquinquant Brothers* a novel by Jean Prévost.

⁵⁴ A weekly newspaper devoted chiefly to literature and the arts.

⁵⁵ Or rather it is very easy to understand when one knows the important position he occupied in “journalism.” [A.]

had genius." "It would require many pages," Montfort adds, "to examine this opinion, and probably to refute it." I reread twelve times over Mendès's statement, then Montfort's, without succeeding in understanding them. Obviously Montfort intends to imply that, Jew though he was, Mendès still had genius. I believe rather that Mendès meant: "If I were not known to be a Jew, I should be granted genius."

*Not worth mentioning.*⁵⁶

It was most appropriate for Mendès to be praised by Montfort.

4 August

Some of my judgments, when they are at variance with the accepted opinion, I do not consider so assured as not to re-examine them from time to time. Most often the result is only to go further in my own direction (as with Tolstoy, or Gautier, whom I pick up again almost every year).

Every year I reread Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* with the greatest effort of poetic attention (which has almost no connection with mere intellectual attention). Very unhappy at first to remain almost insensitive to the charm of that poem, which is considered by the best judges to be incantatory. The incantation did not work. I go back to it again, sharpening my taste on those lines as on a gun-flint; really "whetting" it, convinced that there is no better way to give it a delicate edge. . . .

Very happy, yesterday evening, to understand *Kubla Khan* much better at last. I am well aware that one eventually finds beauty in what one has decided to consider beautiful. But in this case I do not think I am taken in, however subtle may be the debate between my will and my sincerity. Obviously nothing comes up to that immediate and irresistible emotion that makes you kneel panting before certain works of which the echo was latent in you; but there are acquired admirations, sometimes slowly and patiently acquired, which have their value too, and I am not quite sure if they are not even of greater advantage and better educative value for our whole being than the former.

François D., who comes to recite to us the little comedy he was learning for the commencement exercises, is all upset by his brother Paul's opposition. The latter cannot admit François's spending so much time, by entering the Montivilliers school, without contributing to the support of their mother. It is his turn to help her (he is now twelve). In short, he has made it a matter of scruple, and the little fellow, without support, without example, without advice, frightened by his "ego-tism," gives up, with a broken heart.

I write to the school-teacher to inform him of the situation. Fran-

⁵⁶ This line appears in English in the original.

çois D. has promised me that he will go and see him on his return to Criquetot. The teacher can give him good advice. Em. has already talked with him in the best possible way. I was too deeply stirred to find anything to say, and as much by Em.'s words as by the child's distress.

The thing I am most aware of is my limits. And this is natural; for I never, or almost never, occupy the middle of my cage; my whole being surges toward the bars.

Arcachon, 10 August

Two days in Paris. Set out the 8th for Chitré. The 9th by motor with P.; spent the night at La Rochelle, where we met Lacretelle. Then, here, Jean-Paul Allégret.

Only convinced Christians are able to bring worth-while consolation to the afflicted, the outcasts, the suffering, the dying.

The great grievance one can have against the Christian religion is that it sacrifices the strong to the weak. But that strength should strive to find its function in bringing help to weakness, how can one fail to approve this?

Is this worth being saved? A drama to which I continually return; I should like it to be glimpsed also in the third act of my *Œdipe*. The sacrifice of the best. But it is in this gift of himself, this holocaust, that the best affirms himself and convinces himself of his own excellence. That abnegation which accompanies all nobility, that ruinous need to sacrifice yourself to what is not worth you. (See the end of *Beauchamp's Career*.)

Mme D., when little François, her son, had confessed his ambition to her (to continue his studies in order to become a teacher), exclaimed:

"But, my boy, aren't you aiming too high? . . ."

It is she who repeats her own words to me, repeating them thrice over, following them with: "that's what I told him. . . ."

If I were to begin my career over again, it is stories like that of the D. family that I should like to write.

My good brother-in-law Georges is unforgivable not to have noted down from day to day, the chronicle of his township (especially at the time when he was mayor), as I so strongly advised him to do, long before the war even.

Narbonne, 18 August

Arrived last night at Carcassonne; spent the day with Alibert. Since yesterday, after weeks of rain, radiant weather; as pure a sky as if I

were twenty. But I left Jean-Paul so ill, with so little hope of getting well (although he prides himself on still hoping), that I find it hard to yield to joy. Spent six frightful days with him, encouraging him, helping him to suffer, lying to him, trying to hide death from him. Yet we did not fear to speak of it; but even more of his forthcoming convalescence, though it seems that his already so pitiable condition can only get worse soon. He is already suffering so that one comes to hope that the end will not be too long in coming. When I told him that the doctor considered him very courageous, his eyes filled with tears. He wants to be worthy of the love he is aware people have for him. He fears letting himself go and forces himself, twice a day, to go down for meals. Going back up one flight exhausts him. However slowly and cautiously he goes about it, stopping every two steps to catch his breath, waiting for the rapid beating of his heart to calm down a bit, he takes considerable time getting back to normal, shaken by his cough, gasping, with the anguished look of a drowning man. He suffers everywhere: otitis, hydrarthrosis of the knee, sciatica, hepatic colics, breathlessness, nothing is spared him; and each week the malady invents some new perfidy. Meanwhile his mother writes him that God is sending him these trials because He sees that the preceding ones were not enough to bring him back to Him.

"Remarks like that fill my heart with blasphemy," Jean-Paul says to me.

I should have noted the charming meeting with Marcel Achard at the station buffet in Bordeaux.

Port-Vendres, 19 August

Can anything gloomier than Port-Vendres be imagined? Where at least the new hotel of the Compagnie Maritime (?) offers me a very comfortable and even pleasant room for sixty francs. Prevailed over myself to cease paying attention to expense. Moreover I have greater need for comfort than in the heyday of my youth, when the surrounding bareness exalted my fervor and filled it with pride. I had spent the night in Narbonne; excellent room. Too lazy to describe the extraordinary aspect of the public promenade, of the quays; at each end, a free cinema in the open air, intended to people the cafés, but serving in addition a whole mass of idlers; vague scrambling of children seated on the ground.

At Perpignan took an auto to Collioures. The key to the only house still to let cannot be found, or at least the key refuses to turn in the lock. This decided my fate, for I really believe that I should have settled there for — oh, just long enough to go mad with boredom. The

auto takes me to Port-Vendres, whence, at once, I think only of getting away again.

20 August

Reached Marseille last night. I sail at three o'clock for Bastia; where we arrive tomorrow at dawn; whence I plan to reach Calvi the same day.

Calvi, 21 August

Ah, how wise little Henri B. was not to come and how mad I should have been to bring him! How well off I am to be alone! For such a long time I have not traveled alone; however free I am with Marc, still my thought is influenced by him and cannot follow its natural course.

Left Marseille at three p.m.; disembarked this morning before six o'clock at Bastia, where I immediately took an auto for Calvi. Calmest possible crossing, but sleepless night. Cloudy at the moment of sailing, the sky quickly cleared. After some hesitation, I have taken a room in the best hotel; the price of the *pension* obliges me to stay at least seven days.

I was finishing lunch when B., whom I had met in Berlin, came over to my table. I am waiting for him, as I write this, to take coffee with him. A young athlete with bare arms, whom I had greatly admired, was seated at his table. B. tells me that O. G. is here. I notify the hotel office and beg them not to give my name.

22 August

How could complete frankness with you have been possible, since it implied the confession of what I knew you to consider abominable, and I not? since you considered abominable a part of me that I neither could nor would sacrifice?

Wonderful flight of the palm trees, in the night, along the quay of Calvi; wonderful outpouring of their palms. Wonderful façades of the tall houses behind them; balconies, terraces above the narrow street, which is already dark. On the quays a half-naked people walk about, the high society of several pleasure yachts mingling with the fishermen of the little harbor; all redolent of thoughtlessness and pleasure-making. The atmosphere invites one to summary physical pleasures, to games, to debaucheries, and remains quite inappropriate for meditation.

At Calvi, most ordinary food. The amazing manager of the hotel takes it very seriously; with an earnest, confidential, and pained tone of voice he says:

"We are doing our best to please our clients, but it is not easy here. What a country! What trouble I go to! Oh, if I told you, sir, that cer-

tain nights I can't get to sleep for worrying about getting supplies! . . . But one can't do anything with the people hereabouts!"

Moreover, somewhat of a bluff. When he knows that a dish has not come off just right, he makes a great show, comes to serve it himself with delicacy and many little attentions; then, leaning toward you, whispers blandly in your ear:

"And you know, if you like it, don't hesitate to ask for more. Just one word and I'll bring it back. . . . Yes, it is a very delicate fish that was caught specially for the hotel."

After which you do not dare tell him that his fish is inedible. At least he is aware that you are leaving it all on your plate. But his honor is safe.

This morning I finish *The Woodlanders*. Hardy never wrote anything more intelligent, more feeling, more nearly perfect. It is a pearl without flaw, of the best water, which I prefer even to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *The Return of the Native*.⁵⁷ As for *Jude the Obscure*, I shall have to reread it.

I admire Hardy's conscientiousness and patience, the rich stuff of his lyricism, his scrupulous care for perfect motivation. In the story of these existences that chance rules, nothing is left to chance, and each of his characters bears his personal fate within him.

Intoxicated from a day spent in full sunlight, in the open air. B.'s auto took us into the mountains; then, leaving the car, we followed at random and for some time a very steep mule path without any other reward than a glorious fatigue.

On the way back we bathed among the rocks.

That self-indulgence to which love invites us, drawing from us not the best but what is most likely to please the other; you do not so much raise him as he debases you. The leveling process is of necessity effected at the expense of the superior one.

What a masterpiece I should write on this subject if only I were thirty and with the experience of my sixty years! But a whole lifetime is not too much to realize, once awakened from that deception, that you have been tricked. And, naturally, the noblest ones make the best dupes.⁵⁸

25 August

I am letting myself be carried off by new acquaintances who suggest a three-day excursion to Bonifacio by motor. I shall meet them this evening at Ajaccio, where the *Ile de Beauté* will take me by sea. A

⁵⁷ It seems to me, after rereading, that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Return of the Native* are superior to it (1937). [A.]

⁵⁸ See entry of 4 December 1938. [A.]

silvery fog spreads over the smooth sea, veiling the coast that we are following; the vague horizon withdraws to suit my whim; from moment to moment a prolonged bellowing from the ship assures us of our reality.

26 August

Spent the night at Ajaccio. Started for Bonifacio at about nine o'clock. Stifling heat. Upset after lunch; B. B. fans me with a napkin like a boxer's second in the ring. Swim in the Bonifacio grotto. At night, walk along the ramp linking the harbor to the upper town; darkness. The bench on which are seated three young local fishermen. Our hotel is rather far from town, in a bend of the little valley that opens onto the harbor. Insomnia; at about three a.m. the Arab troops from the fort pass silently. We see them pass by again singing, shortly before our departure.

27 August

Spent the night at Corte. The road between Zonra and Ghisoni is very beautiful. Were I twenty years younger, I should come and settle at Ospedale, Cozzano, or Ghisoni (?) in the forest of chestnut trees. Swimming at Porto-Vecchio.

28 August

Lunched at Ile Rousse. Back to Calvi. In all my life I have never seen a purer sky, a more radiant sun.

30 August

I allow myself to be led once again into a trip to Saint-Florent, which takes the whole day, my last one in Corsica.

Yesterday I had been to tea at Tristan Tzara's, who is charming; his young wife even more charming.

Short night, for I must be on board before six o'clock. I come back drunk with sun, with pleasure, my mind quite volatilized.

Nice, 31 August

Tomorrow morning I take the bus for Barcelonnette, then Briançon.

Noon, 1 September

Col d'Allos.

I do not believe my joy has ever been deeper or keener. The air has never been softer and I have never breathed it more lovingly. My subtly active mind, beclouded by no worry, smiles at the humblest and pleasantest thought, as my flesh does at the azure, at the sun, and my heart at everything that lives. I did not feel any younger at twenty;

and I am better aware of the value of the moment. I was more tormented by desires, by imperious demands. To my excesses at Calvi I owe a great calm. My glances are disinterested and the mirror of my mind is comparable to the surface of an unruffled lake on which all the reflections round about come voluptuously, but very purely, to take their place.

Probably some catastrophe is awaiting me in Paris in return for all this happiness.

My greatest emotion of this day, and one that will remain very green in my memory: at the last turn in the road before going through the Col d'Allos, suddenly, a tremendous flock of sheep grazing the short grass of those heights. The evening sun was casting its last rays on those slopes, and the russet-green grass, the russet-white of the sheep, spread out like a frieze, made a powerful and perfect harmony under the sky. It seemed to me that it had been a long time since I had seen anything so beautiful.

When the bus stopped, almost immediately afterward, beyond the col, I went to talk with the old shepherd. As I had thought, those sheep (about a thousand, he said, but divided among various parts of the mountains) come from near Arles. They are the ones that pass through Manosque and that Giono told me about so enthusiastically. They take between eight and twelve days to come this far. All this seems to leave rather indifferent my traveling companions, to whom I tried to communicate some of my emotion. But no; looking later on, at Barcelonnette, for some postcards as a reminder of those admirable grassy summits we had just left, I found nothing but dry photographic records as unattractive as affidavits. And I thought sadly: but that is what they see; such is the world's appearance to them: clear, sharp, precise, stripped, with nothing left of that poetic halo which enchants it: a world without overtones, which awakens no echo in their hearts, incapable of intoxication.

The stupidity of my neighbors' remarks last night at the movies in Nice! Yet rich and "distinguished." But it is for just such people that films are made. Success depends on them. They are the great number. They are humanity. Where Flaubert shook with laughter, I feel only an immense sadness.

Cuvernille, 28 September

No desire to note down anything for almost three weeks that I have been here (broken by a very short trip to Paris). Read with rapture *Evan Harrington*.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ George Meredith's novel (1861).

Strenuous, frantic piano-practice. Exclusively Bach and Chopin.

Almost finished my *Cedipe*; but I fear having lost sight of the real subject of my play throughout the third act, which calls for complete revision, rewriting.

Braffy, 13 October

Accompanying Jean Schlumberger to Cambremer by motor, we pass in front of La Roque, which I hadn't seen for a long time.⁶⁰ The new owners, more concerned with display than with poetry, have completely changed the character of the garden (now a "French garden"), and of the surroundings, to such a degree that my memories have trouble inhabiting it. I feel again, as I see these scenes of my childhood, how refractory I am to melancholy. Not that I am incapable of experiencing it, but it is a feeling that embarrasses and encumbers me. I don't know what to do with it and my whole being resists yielding to it; it makes me limp and I like myself only when taut.

20 October

Back in Cuverville for several days now, I shall leave again tomorrow evening, having much improved but not completely finished my *Cedipe*. Long and patient piano-practice; made undeniable progress. I suffered not to have begun some important reading, but it might perhaps have distracted me too much from *Cedipe*. The *Memories of an Infantry Officer* by Siegfried Sassoon, which I had got on Bennett's recommendation, has an exquisite tone and I should like it very much if I could understand it completely, but many slang terms and popular expressions escape me and I look for them in vain in the dictionaries. I should like to return here with *Clarissa Harlowe*.

Certainly I am no longer tormented by an imperious desire to write. The feeling that "the most important remains to be said" has ceased to inhabit me as it once did, and I convince myself on the contrary that perhaps I no longer have much to add to what a perspicacious reader can glimpse in my writings.

But these are a lazy man's reasons that I invent *a posteriori* and that a bit of fervor would melt. By now, moreover, I am too well aware that I am being observed, and writing is like the piano: I play better when I know I am not being listened to. Besides, just now, I am quite taken up with *Cedipe*.

⁶⁰ Braffy, near Lisieux, was Jean Schlumberger's home. La Roque-Baignard, like Cuverville, was a country home belonging to the family of André Gide's mother. There he spent much of his childhood and it figures in his memoirs; he sold the property early in this century.

Saint-Clair, 2 November

Auguste Bréal, on my way through Marseille, tells me of some extraordinary letters from Claudel to Philippe Berthelot, which the latter lent him and which he copied. Letters calling down curses on Goethe, which Bréal promises to read me the next time I come through Marseille. Philippe does not know Goethe well and is ready to judge him according to Claudel (who "cannot be wrong") — of whom, moreover, he has not read anything in a long time, and this allows him to continue to see in him a superior mind. Claudel has always treated Goethe with an easily sovereign scorn. Oh, how this scorn puts me at ease! So much voluntary (and instinctive) lack of intelligence, that set purpose to reject what cannot be annexed, gives extraordinary encouragement to my resistance, and I am more grateful to them than they could imagine (to Claudel, Massis, etc.) for their rejections.

Copeau lives too much alone, too far outside everything, to be aware of what might enlighten him. Like all mystics, he misses the obvious. I have just spent two days at Pernand with him. Impossible to resist longer his affectionate call. But I had promised to speak to him, and I did so, the second evening, without too much circumlocution. "Between us everything would be all right if I were merely skeptical," I had written him. "I have only too long sought conciliation and bending my thought to others. I become conscious of its nature when I feel to what it is opposed." He would like to see me set it forth in a continuous argument. But this only leads to refutation, and I consider all discussion useless. One can discuss interminably. And it serves no purpose. I refuse to lend myself to it. I am not eager to prove that I am right, nor that they are wrong.

Copeau moreover seems to me not to have examined at all the exigencies of orthodoxy; this is what allows him to think himself orthodox, and to be amazed and very sorry that his friend is not. There is in his case even more ignorance than blindness. He refuses to judge Catholicism according to what he considers as its worst products, which, he claims, disqualify only themselves. What he has not considered is to what a degree "faith" can, and must necessarily, warp the integrity of thought, which consequently becomes resigned to falsehood. Howbeit, nothing is nobler than the virtues by which he is attached to the Church.

But, in the long profession I made to him, I am aware of having said many stupid things.

I find a good example of grammatical indecision and uncertainty in Proust, whose *La Prisonnière* I am rereading. I note there: ". . . *tant j'avais peur qu'un de mes amis s'amourachât d'elle, ne l'attendît dehors,*

ou que . . . dans le couloir de l'antichambre, elle pût faire un signe." ⁶¹
(p. 75.)

Saint-Clair, 7 November

After several days of violent *mistral*, radiant weather. Read between Paris and Marseille *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, which Bennett had sent me; the most recent book by D. H. Lawrence, by whom I had not yet read anything. The discovery of Lawrence, Ruyters told me, was the great event of his life. I fear that there may be much resentment in his present predilection for contemporary English literature. I think, and hope, that the other books by Lawrence are better. This one struck me as so empty and so crude in its brutality that its cynicism, which I might otherwise like, becomes quite inoffensive. There are few books that I have disliked as much.

9 November

Radiant weather. I should like to be gone. Oh, I should like to put to better use the time that is left me to live!

I really believe that I have finished *Œdipe*, and I believe that I have really finished it properly. That is, that I got into it almost everything I had planned to put into it. But I do not much like this work of fitting together. I am eager to get to something else, where I can let myself go.

14 November

No pleasure in being in Tunis again save that of showing to Elisabeth a country that is new to her. As far as I am concerned, I return here as in a rut and am angry with myself for falling back into it. My brain, moreover, is still numbed by all the Mothersills I absorbed yesterday, thanks to which, doubtless, I avoided being seasick. Rather bad crossing; remained in bed almost all the time. Reached Tunis in the rain. (On approaching the coast, wonderful color of the sea, first green, then gradually yellowing, under a lavender sky; beauty of the waves, etc. . . . Very Delacroix.)

This morning frightful weather. No desire, except to read and to work. The mail brings me the proofs of *Œdipe*.

⁶¹ The point here is that with three parallel verbs dependent on the same expression (*j'avais peur que*) Proust uses the pleonastic *ne* with only one. Most grammarians would approve the use of *ne* before each of these verbs or its omission altogether.

Tunis, 15 November

Saw last night a film by René Clair: *Sous les toits de Paris*.⁶² Probably one of the best French films; perhaps the best.

Got home at midnight; *crapette*⁶³ until one o'clock, which I am furious to have lost.

Rose early to pick up Tournier, who is called to court by jury duty. We go there with him. A little room lacking the solemnity of the great Assize Courts. Everything takes place as if in the bosom of the family. Six jurors sit on the right and left of the three judges. Since the accused is an Italian, three of the jurors are Italians. The case has no great intrinsic interest: an attempted robbery, which would be handled in a mere police court were it not for the apparent housebreaking that accompanies it. But it is in no wise certain that the accused is the guilty person. And I feel again the atrocious anguish that used to seize me at the Rouen Assize Court. The public prosecutor's implacable charge, speaking in the name of society, appealing to the jury's instincts of conservation, defense of private property . . . "how far would we go if . . ." etc. would be enough to make me an anarchist. The lawyer for the defense, extremely young and most likable, was addressing a jury for the first time. He had succeeded in convincing me of his client's innocence, so that the sentence to five years in prison without benefit of reprieve really flabbergasted me.

16 November

With all information in hand, it is clear that the condemned is certainly the guilty man (though he did not deserve such a heavy sentence). No doubt would have been possible had it not been for fear of compromising an important personage — which prevented bringing all the details out into the open.

Gabès, 21 November

The oasis of Gabès, which I did not yet know, seems to me one of the most beautiful I have known. The abundance of the waters (warm). . . . I did not think myself any longer capable of such admiration. If I had encountered Gabès at twenty, it seems to me that I might have turned it to richer account than Biskra. The extraordinary indentations of the rocks above the oasis.

A few kilometers from Sfax, a little owl, perched on the point of an aloe leaf, alongside the road. We back up to see him better, but he flies away at our approach. Two days before, we had already seen one

⁶² *Under the Roofs of Paris* was filmed in 1929.

⁶³ An ancient French game of cards, a sort of "patience" for two hands.

shortly beyond Zaghouan on a telegraph wire, and we spent a long time observing each other. He preened himself and made faces, turning sidewise to look at us over his shoulder.

First night at Kairouan. (The guide, in the square, after a night walk through the Arab town.) The second at Sfax. From Sousse to Sfax, followed the coast, as I had never done. Monastir and Malidia, marvelous.

Between Sfax and Gabès we leave the direct road to reach "la Skéra" on the edge of the sea, where we lunch in the shade of a palm tree (foie-gras and orange marmalade). Extraordinary landscape, abandoned beach: an ass, a palm tree, the clay cliff; an ineffably soft sky. Rarely seen a more stirring landscape.

19 December

Back to France.

Our judgments about things vary according to the time left us to live — that we think is left us to live.

2 January

Stalled at Saint-Clair; cold caught on the way back, during the crossing, then the automobile ride from Marseille here. I should like to be at Cuverville. . . .

Finished going over (with Elisabeth) the translation of *The Old Wives' Tale*. Sent back to Roger Martin du Gard the second volume of proofs with corrections written in. Enormous work that we had the constancy to continue throughout our trip in Tunisia, at a rate of about two hours every day.

Meanwhile read Bennett's *Imperial Palace* with very great interest and Marie Delcourt's *Vie d'Euripide*.¹

At Saint-Clair reread *Honorine* and *Un Début dans la vie*.²

X. reproaches me with so many hours devoted to piano-practice, lost, he says, to literary production. . . . But I am not quite persuaded that, even with more time, I should have been able to produce more, or especially (for I am not quite sincere in writing the lines I have just written: very often I have wept over the number of projected works that I could have, should have, written) that my work would have gained much by being more abundant. Probably I would have won greater notoriety and my thought would have imposed itself more; but it seems to me that, most often, people write too much, that the thought of many authors would gain by being less diluted, and that by exposing itself too diffusely it makes itself more vulnerable to time, to ruin. Most often the most prolix are those who have the least to say.

La Rochefoucauld would doubtless have been very ill-advised to spin out his *Maximes* into novels. How often I am seized by the desire to write, then stopped by the question: is this worth saying? I like feeling in an author an inner, unexploited wealth, which only rises to the surface in the rare writings he gives us. But perhaps I have come to think thus only to excuse in my own eyes an excessive continence, with which I am occasionally able to reproach myself bitterly. What I want above all to avoid is remorse, regret, sorrow; I will not allow them to darken the end of my life.

¹ *Life of Euripides*. *Imperial Palace* (1930) was then a recent book, whereas *The Old Wives' Tale* by the same author had appeared in 1908.

² *Honorine* and *A Start in Life* are both short novels by Balzac.

4 January

For Em. Dare to tell her:

"Have you not understood that I prefer to die anywhere rather than in Paris, and that if I cannot have you beside my bed at my last moment, I prefer not to have anyone?"

Every evening, before going to sleep, and often besides during the day, X. (that is, I) would ask himself this question:

"Am I really ready to die?"

He took it upon himself to reply: "Yes."

Paris, 12 January

The flight of time is nowhere so apparent as in Paris; the empty flight of hours; the flight of empty hours. It seems to me that I have done nothing the last few days that a secretary would not have done just as well. Put books and letters in order, paid bills, etc. Impatiently I struggled to get out from under the avalanche, to breathe. And I never once ceased thinking that I could have given all this time to meditation, to work.

I finally receive *La Revue de France*, in which I can read Bénilon's article; written to impress his colleagues and his superiors, too obviously it seems to me, to be able to hurt me much.

The idea that I could have tried to pass myself off as Governor down there in order to receive honors from the blacks strikes me as particularly comical.

In *Les Cahiers du mois*, a new *Oraison funèbre pour André Gide*, which gives me credit for some talent, but worn out — in other words, having ceased to be harmful. And immediately after, I read a rather long study by a Chinese woman on *L'Attitude d'André Gide*; since it is made up of quotations (but well chosen), it seems to me excellent, and because she is willing to take me simply for what I am.³

³ What Gide calls the "Funeral Oration for André Gide" is doubtless the double article by Marcel Arland and François Berge in the issue entitled "*Examen de conscience*" ("Self-Examination") published by *Les Cahiers du mois* in June 1926. Without perhaps intending to do so, both writers treat Gide as if he were dead, summing up his virtues and shortcomings. Arland concludes thus: "What will remain then of André Gide's example? His ardor, his torment, his desire for purity and complete realization, and the very moving image of a man beset by himself, even when, and especially when, he thinks he is dominating himself." "The Attitude of André Gide" by Mme Yang Tchang Lomine was a thesis presented at the University of Lyon in 1927.

15 January

Lecture by Copeau at the Vieux-Colombier (the second, but I had grippe too badly to be able to go to the first).

How many reflections this speech gave rise to! And to begin with, in his exaggerated modesty (much applauded, so that he never has such success as when he declares he doesn't care about success), he is unwilling to consider that he has inscribed his name deeply in the history of the theater and that the French stage is not the same since his glorious efforts. But some in my part of the hall were concerned to hear him depict as a general abandonment a solitude for which he had voluntarily, patiently, and passionately worked. "Don't talk to the helmsman," he used to say. He had managed to call forth, more than anyone I have known, the most fervent devotion from many; no one was more surrounded by friends, more seconded, more beloved than he. The real desertion, the one from which he had most to suffer (but it was hard for him to speak of this), was that of the authors. He could hope, and I hoped with him, that the only thing lacking was the instrument (which he was providing) for a renaissance of the theater to take place; new works, strong and young, called forth by the need he had of them, were of necessity going to pour in. . . . I thought so too. Nothing of the sort happened. And his immense effort remained without any direct relation to the epoch. He was struggling against the epoch, as any good artist must do. But dramatic art has this frightful disadvantage, that it must appeal to the public, count with and on the public. This is indeed what made me turn away from it, more and more convinced that truth is not on the side of the greatest number. Copeau, though claiming not to, was working for a select few. He wanted to lead to perfection, to style, to purity, an essentially impure art that gets along without all that. He frightens me when he declares that he was never closer to achieving his aim than in the Japanese *No* drama he was putting on, which an accident prevented him from presenting to the public, and of which I saw the last rehearsals. . . . A play without any relation to our traditions, our customs, our beliefs; in which, artificially, he achieved without much difficulty an arbitrary "stylization," the exactitude of which was absolutely unverifiable, totally factitious, made up of slowness, pauses, something indefinably strained toward the supernatural in the tone of voice, gestures, and expressions of the actors.

He frightens me even more when, as a conclusion to his lecture, he declared, in substance, that he was now fifty years old, still felt "at the height of his powers," game despite so many blighted hopes, ready to fight again. I should like so much that, ceasing to fight against the Chimera which has henceforth withdrawn into him, he should concern himself solely with completing that literary work of which he spoke

at Pernand and which, at least, will survive. But neither is he willing to admit to himself to what extent his new religious convictions keep him from producing that work which refuses to go in the direction of his prayers; just as he refused to admit, to admit to himself, that between Catholicism and dramatic art there could be no alliance, save to the detriment of one or the other, and only through a distorting compromise.

It is indeed because Copeau's artistic ideal is visionary that he is a pathetic figure. I have always thought that there was something of Ibsen's Brand in his case. He too let himself be misled by an image of holiness, which misleads only the noblest; but I do not know whether Catholicism ought not to see in this one of the demon's most perfidious snares, for that form of holiness can be achieved only at the expense of others and much pride is hidden in it.

18 January

I am leaving for Cuverville.

At the N.R.F. I encounter Malraux, who speaks to me of my *Cedipe*.

"Yes," he says laughing, "Cedipus escapes the Sphinx, but only to let himself be eventually gobbled up by his daughter. . . . You ought to write an *Cedipus at Colonus*, in which Cedipus, before dying, would repulse even Antigone."

And I imagine, as a sort of epilogue, a dialogue between Cedipus and Theseus. I think of a life of Theseus (oh, I have been thinking of it for a long time!) in which would take place (what I invent only to-day in the train taking me to Cuverville) a decisive meeting of the two heroes, each measuring himself against the other, and throwing light upon, each in opposition to the other, their two lives.⁴

I am reading with the most sustained attention the reflections* by Grasset attached to Sieburg's book on France.⁵ I do not like Grasset's writing: "There is not a Frenchman who does not . . ." for it just happens that on these very serious matters the Frenchman I am does not think at all as he does. I do not believe in that "constancy" of Man on which he bases his whole argument. The sentence in which he asserts that "a certain degree of knowledge of man and of his welfare cannot be exceeded and that *this degree was achieved in the earliest times*"

⁴ This is precisely what Gide was to do in his *Thésée*, first published in 1946 though the project goes back at least to 1911. See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 302.

⁵ Friedrich Sieburg's *Gott in Frankreich* (Who Are These French?) appeared in French translation in 1930 as *Dieu est-il Français?* with a preface by the publisher Bernard Grasset.

when man began to think" is absurd. Absurd that idea of a man who, one fine day, "begins to think" (oh, what a fine day!), etc. . . . absurd, moreover, in a very French way (I recognize this, alas!) and very Catholic way. And since man has *become*, since he has not always been what he is, how can one fail to admit that he will not always be stationary, that he will continue to become? By what right do you assert to me that he cannot hope to progress and that his first word must be also his last?

21 January

That faith which appears all the more robust from becoming somewhat silly and, one might say, harmlessly childish.

Thus Noah in Obey's play,⁶ speaking of God, says: "He might eventually get angry. He's not a saint, after all, that fellow!" There are examples of this in Péguy, but they are moving, for one feels the tears in his voice.

22 January

Too many projects. Not knowing to which to give the advantage, I equivocate and time flies. With *Cedipe* now finished, I have ahead of me those *Notes sur Chopin*, my *Geneviève*, the story of Paumier (Mulot) at La Roque, of which I should like to make a new chapter for *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . and it could be, it ought to be important; finally and especially the *Nouvelles Nourritures*.⁷ . . . And, in doubt, I turn back to piano-practice as to an opium that calms the turbulence of my thought and pacifies my restless will. Each of the last few days I have spent four to five hours at the piano. (Mozart's concertos, the Bach-Busoni *Orgelchoralvorspiele*, and Granados's *Goyescas*.)

I am reading concurrently Sieburg's *Dieu est-il Français?* which invites me to infinite reflections, and Curtius's *Frankreich*, which I am delighted to understand so well.⁸

⁶ *Noé* was first produced at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier by the Compagnie des Quinze on 18 January 1931; as *Noah* it was given in New York at the Longacre Theater on 19 February 1935.

⁷ *Notes on Chopin*, planned as early as 1914, was published in the *Revue musicale* for December 1931. *Geneviève*, the sequel to *The School for Wives* and *Robert*, first appeared in 1939. The story of Mulot, as his name eventually appears, became *Jeunesse* (*Youth*) and was first published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in September 1931. *New Fruits of the Earth* first appeared in 1935.

⁸ Curtius's book was eventually translated into French as *Essai sur la France* (*Essay on France*).

24 January

Finished Curtius's book. The personal part is less considerable than one would wish. However excellent the historical exposition is, my hunger goes too often unsatisfied. It receives better treatment in Sieburg's book. It is certainly through modesty that Curtius effaces himself. But already those well-lighted retrospective panoramas provide much food for reflection. I should like to know, however, just what, in a Frenchman's brain, is the inherited share and whether those peculiarities which Curtius so effectively singles out are not due especially to his upbringing, to the advice of his teachers, to the example of neighbors, etc. — in short, whether he would not be quite different if brought up in another country without knowing himself that he is French.

Remarkable speech by Valéry. Admirably grave, ample, and solemn, without any bombast and written in a most peculiar style, but noble and beautiful to the point of being as if depersonalized. Rises far above everything that is being written today.

25 January

Finished Sieburg's book.

Even if the serious shortcomings that Sieburg reproaches us with were real (and they are very close to being so, but the fact that they are not *quite* so is enough to permit me complete hope), the alternative with which he claims we are faced would remain none the less inadmissible, and nothing in this book proves to me that European equilibrium cannot be re-established without France's *handing in her resignation*. She owes it to herself to prove that she is capable of evolving without necessarily repudiating her past. A renewal for which such a price was paid would be tantamount to a bankruptcy. It is that very past that must give birth to her future. But the strength with which she clings to things is terrifying. It makes me think of Valéry's remark: "How many people are killed in accidents because of not wanting to let go their umbrella!"

France is no more obliged to adopt the pace of others than to impose her pace on other nations; but rather to change her pace herself and convince herself of the truth of the Gospel saying: "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles." That new wine may be French wine, even were it not to be recognized at first as French. Our country has many surprises in store for Sieburg (and for herself); she is rich in unsuspected resources. However inert its dough may often seem, it takes very little yeast to make it rise.

Three images are too many for the same thought, alas; but let us pursue the last one. The dough does not like the yeast. The yeast for her is the *foreign*. That yeast was often necessary (in literature of

course) to bring out wonderful manifestations: Italian yeast for Ronsard, Spanish for Corneille, English for romanticism, German also; the works called forth in this way are no less French, and the blame heaped on me today for listening to the voice of the Russians is ill-founded. Despite the reproach, so often justified, of not taking the foreign into account, no literature perhaps more than the French has managed to be impregnated by it while still maintaining its own stamp and its peculiarities. It might even be said that, given the Frenchman's virtues (of clarity, restatement, tact, and ability to perfect), no other nation has greater need of the foreign; and that without a contribution from outside he would run the risk of fatally whittling down his substance if he did not, on the other hand, also possess inventive powers — which he most often succeeds in exploiting only much later, behind other countries.

Grasset in his reply to Sieburg is probably right in saying that Germany is in a stage of development that France has left far behind. But he is wrong in thinking that it is an advantage to be old. Germany has over us just that advantage, misunderstood among us, of youth.

France of late is beginning to show regard for youth. First sign of a rejuvenation.

I heartily scorn that kind of wisdom that is attained only through cooling off or lassitude.

My memory is no less good and it seems to me that it is but recently that *I know how to learn*.

And I have never suffered more from my insufficient education.

Cuverville, 26 January

No more soporific atmosphere than that of this region. I suspect that it contributed greatly to the slowness and difficulty with which Flaubert worked. When he thought he was struggling against words, he was struggling against the sky; and perhaps in another climate, the dryness of the air exalting his spirits, he might have been less exigent, or have obtained his results without such efforts.

I believe I have already written this somewhere. If repetitions are sometimes found in the pages of this journal, I do not care. I would rather repeat than let it be lost. It is always easy, later on, to strike out the repetition.⁹

⁹ Gide does not seem to have expressed this thought about Flaubert elsewhere in his *Journals*, though he has often noted the effect of Normandy on his own writing; see *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 122, and Vol. II, pp. 102-3.

27 January

Some days it would be hard for me to maintain the idea of happiness in me, or I could do so only artificially; and even that resolve to be happy seems to me at such times almost impious. Too few people can achieve happiness today. I recall Mme Mayrisch's gloom on her return from Persia after having traveled through such vast lands, she said, in which happiness was unknown, impossible. . . .

Went to see poor Mme D. in Cuverville. She is suffering a bit less from her varicose veins; but just a few days ago her pains were unbearable. They must have been great to make her send for the doctor. Her sores looked so bad that she became frightened: "It's gangrene!" I tell her that she ought to keep her leg supported on a chair, since looking after the two babies entrusted to her by the Poor Law Administration keeps her from staying in bed; but she objects that her feet become frigid as soon as she takes them off her foot-warmer. All this without complaint, with acceptance. . . . What resignation in suffering! It does not even occur to her that, like anyone else, she would have a right to be happy. Misfortune is her lot. She has settled into it, feels at home in it.

We talk of little François, apprenticed to a mechanic in Montivilliers. But he doesn't bring in to her the little he would make as a farm-hand; and what an outlay for his shoes and his clothing! "He can't stay there," she says. "That's what I kept telling him: 'You're costing me too much, my boy.'" And then she adds: "He understands!"

The brothers likewise are unwilling to allow the child to choose a calling that does not bring in any returns at once, even were it to be better paid later on. And those immediate demands are most likely going to decide his life for him, despite the desire that child had *to learn*, which he had come to tell us about last summer, calling on us in the hope that we might help him. He wanted to be a school-teacher. And as soon as the family learned it, a great outcry of indignation. He then fell back on the calling of mechanic. But even this little seems today to be too high an aspiration for him.

30 January

Received at last the issue of *Latinité* so long announced which contains an "impartial" inquiry into my "influence" in Europe.¹⁰ There are

¹⁰ The issue of *Latinité* for January 1931 contained a symposium on Gide conducted by V. de Laprade and J. Reynaud, with contributions from Germany (Emil Ludwig, Max Bröck, Klaus Mann, Carl Sternheim, Heinrich Mann, Arnold Zweig, etc.), Czechoslovakia, Italy (Lionello Fiumi, Alberto Consiglio, etc.), Rumania, England (Bernard Shaw and Francis Hackett), and France (Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Rachilde, Jean Cassou, Drieu la Rochelle, Maurice Bedel, Francis de Miomandre, etc.).

still many critics who fancy that I have always been much concerned and preoccupied with my influence and that I wrote with the aim of bending and dominating the minds of my readers. I hoped to have given proof of the contrary, my sole desire having been until quite recently to write works of art, if not precisely impersonal, at least emancipated from myself, and which, if they exerted any action over the reader, could only help him to see clearly, to question himself, and to force him to think, were it against me, to leave me.

But it is certain that, of late, my position is not the same. This is also because I see more clearly in myself and want much more definitely and vigorously what seems to me much more clearly preferable. In any case, and whatever it may be, the thing I am most bitterly reproached with is having worked for the emancipation of the mind. This seems unpardonable to the group that, on the contrary, aims only toward the most complete submission to authority, to rules, to tradition, etc. That group, which is very powerful, always uses the same weapons, which it always has at hand. The best reason it can find to prove that man *must* not change is that he *can* not change. For as soon as one glimpses the possibility of a progress, how can one fail to wish to obtain it? It is that glimpse of a possible progress that has so deeply *cultivated* my thoughts and modified my gait.

The thing I notice above all in the hostile replies is that their authors are not judging me according to my books (which they admit not knowing) but according to the reputation that has been made me and which they are not concerned to verify as to exactitude. Even those of their side will gradually discover that I am not exactly like what they first thought me to be. Besides, those protests more than anything else have assured me of my reality, of my value; or rather, and more precisely, it is only in the light of them that I began to become aware of it. Originally I looked upon myself simply as an artist, and was concerned, in the manner of Flaubert, with hardly anything but the good quality of my work. Its profound significance, to tell the truth, escaped me. But is it not natural that that significance of the work, for any artist anxiously careful of his craftsmanship and *sincere*, should first elude its author? For his personality, whatever he may do, shows through in his work, and what takes on significance is not so much the work but himself.

31 January

Some people would be sufficiently tender-hearted, but they lack imagination to the point of not being able to imagine, even weakly, the sufferings of those who are not close to them. The far-away ceases to seem quite real to them and they read descriptions of the imprisonment and brutalities suffered by the "suspect" or "unorthodox" pro-

fessors in Poland, etc., etc., in the same spirit as tales of horrors of past ages. It does not *touch* them. A clever novelist would be able to move them more. In that sympathy for imaginary misfortunes there is a certain flattering self-indulgence; the knowledge of real sufferings only embarrasses. One thinks: What do you expect me to do about it? And, in the certainty of one's inability to help, each one finds permission to sit back and do nothing.

As for feeling, through their very opinions, somewhat bound up with the oppressors and torturers, this never occurs to them. Obviously they feel and tell themselves that if they lived in the countries where such abominations take place, *they* would be on the right side. And isn't it because I tell myself that I should be *on the other side* that these stories move me to such a degree? Feeling on the side of those who are being oppressed *is a part of my optimism*, and I know that if I endured their sufferings with them, my optimism would not be stifled. It is not at the mercy of constraints. Profound optimism is always on the side of the tortured.

It is not at all that I feel more "human" today than at the time when no trace of such preoccupations could be found in my work. I simply took care to forbid them access to it, judging that they had nothing to do with art. I am no longer so sure of this, nor that anything can and must remain foreign to art; it runs the risk of becoming, it necessarily becomes, artifice if what is closest to the artist's heart is banished from it.

1 February

Entrust my thoughts to this notebook from day to day. What little extravagance they might occasionally contain (I am thinking particularly of what I wrote yesterday) seems more excusable here than it would be in a book — which, moreover, I am in no wise sure of being able to write. And perhaps this notebook will help to prevent the misinterpretation of my works, which, so often, I see badly understood even without hostile intent. And I also see myself too often checked by the too great abundance of over-ramified thoughts that form a tangle when I have gone too long without writing. So that in such cases my silence comes not from a lack of things to say, but from their tumultuous abundance.

I have always thought it was unbecoming to explain one's books (even though a preface would sometimes have avoided many misunderstandings). They are very badly written if, in order to understand them better, it is not enough to read them better. And I continue to hope that later on they will be granted the attention that is refused or begrudged them today.

2 February

This morning wrote without too much difficulty this letter, of which I make a copy, for I can use it again:

DEAR MADEMOISELLE,

No, do not excuse yourself for the time you have taken by asking me to read your charming letter. But do not hope that I can find any to read your manuscripts with the attention that I feel sure they deserve. Nevertheless I should take that time, and quite willingly, if I thought that my advice on them could possibly be of any advantage to you; but I long ago ceased to believe in the virtue of any advice other than what one can give oneself.

This bit, however, which you will be able to extract from Mme de Sévigné's remark that I am inclined to quote to the too numerous young people, and particularly girls, who seek my opinion:

"When I listen only to myself, I do wonders."

Most sincerely, etc.

Worked considerably over the *Fandango de candil* by Granados¹¹ the last few days (since my return here), which I have the greatest difficulty merely getting into my head because of the incessant repetitions and half-repetitions — and which I am still far from playing in a way that satisfies me.

I am getting ahead with *Clarissa Harlowe*. I have reached page 220 of the second volume; but there are five, of five hundred pages each. Rarely read a book with so much application.

3 February

Long and very interesting letter from Roger about my *Cedipe*. (Replied to him at length the same day.) He complains of the lack of breadth and development of my drama. But did not my intentional exclusion of all images, of every oratorical development, have necessarily to lead to this contraction? I do not know whether or not I am to regret it.

I reread his *Confidence africaine*¹² with the greatest satisfaction. Not a single lapse, not a single gap. Obviously one who can achieve such perfection in craftsmanship has every right to criticize and advise others; it is quite natural that he should ask of others what he demands of and obtains from himself, and especially when those others are his friends.

¹¹ This dance, full of popular rhythm and color, is one of the piano pieces of the *Goyescas*.

¹² *The African Confidence* (1931) is a short novel relating a curious case of incest in the words of the protagonist, by Roger Martin du Gard, referred to above as Roger.

5 February

Yesterday reread aloud my *Œdipe* to Agnès Copeau and Em., who begged me to do so.

As a result, I have come to regret the letter I wrote to Roger the day before in reply to his criticisms. Through great fear of self-indulgence, I am most inclined to welcome criticisms; but decidedly Roger's did not seem to me well founded. Such as it is, I believe that my drama is what it had to be and what I wanted it to be.¹³ It answers my requirements; satisfies me. A more ample ending would have thrown it off balance. Intentionally I suppressed all the amplifying overtones, which it is enough for me to awaken in the reader's mind.¹⁴

And I receive a note from Roger, very saddening since it tells of an attack of phlebitis (only too clearly foreseen!), but which begins thus: "Forgive me my mean letter about *Œdipe*. Fate has already cruelly avenged you." So that I am, nevertheless, quite happy to have already told him of my gratitude for his frank criticisms.

"With talent you do what you will; when you have genius, you do what you can." I have forgotten whose is this wonderful remark (Ingres?).

The mother-in-law of Davidson (who is making a bust of me and at whose house I lunch today), a charming old lady of eighty-four, when — on the point of lighting a cigarette after the meal — I ask her if smoking bothers her, tells us that a similar question was put to her, before 1870, by Bismarck, in a train between Paris and Saint-Germain in which she happened to be alone with him. To which she replied at once:

"Sir, I do not know. No one has ever smoked in my presence."

Bismarck immediately had the train stopped so that he could change to another compartment.

Interesting conversation, last night at P.'s, with Fernandez, Madrazo, two young men whose names I do not know, and Ceillier, with

¹³ After writing "*ce que je voulais qu'il soit*" Gide adds in parentheses: "*qu'il soit, non qu'il fût*," in order to indicate that his wish is fulfilled, and that he has intentionally avoided the traditional agreement of tenses.

¹⁴ I believe, however, that in the third act I could have let myself go a bit more. Doubtless my reason intervenes too much. Nothing that is not intentional, motivated, necessary. What I used to call "God's share" reduced to nothing, through lack of confidence, lack of belief in inspiration, which has made me lack courage to write except when not dominated by emotion. One ought to be willing to write without knowing very well what one is saying, or especially what one is going to say. [A.]

whom I had dined and whom I had brought along at about ten o'clock. Intended to stay only an hour, but the evening went on until after one a.m. Fortunately I feel much more at ease with Fernandez; his intelligence is so active and quick that, whatever you say to him, he had always thought it before you. Being too completely and too quickly understood does not encourage one to talk as much as one might think.

Skimmed through the new book by Douglas. Going back to the declarations of his first book (*Oscar Wilde and Myself*), he now admits that his testimony was false; but he was more or less forced to write that book, he says, and moreover he did not write the untruthful parts himself but simply signed them, so that they appeared under his name without his being exactly their author. In this new book, no more pretence; what he is going to tell, he says, is the Truth; what he calls: "the real Truth." I liked him almost better when he told the *other kind*!

Marseille, 23 February

I take B. to the café, eager to listen to him and to talk to him alone. His family knows about everything, but no matter. . . . And perhaps, far from his wife and children, the little lecturing I can do will have more chance of being accepted. (What an odd expression: "to lecture someone"!) But it so happened that I wanted above all to avoid the moralizing tone; and I even protested when he thanked me for my "good advice."

"No, Monsieur B., no, do not talk of advice; I am twelve years older than you, but I should not allow myself to give you advice. I am merely talking to you as a friend, since you permit me to do so. Sometimes talking freely like this relieves one; it helps one to see clearly." (I took care to speak very distinctly, very clearly, to say nothing that he could not understand completely. We were seated beside each other, he on my right, against the wall, and with two glasses of port in front of us.)

B.'s face, rather handsome and with regular features — which even struck me, the first time I saw him, two years ago, as marked with a certain Latin nobility — is now reddened, swollen with insomnia, ravaged by passion.

He listens to me patiently, eager to show his deference, and, when he speaks, does so with a certain effort at elegance (he says: *je suis été* since *j'ai été* seems to him less distinguished, probably because of the hiatus.¹⁵), but without pretence. I talk of his family's love, the happiness he is forever compromising for a necessarily momentary satisfaction. But that happiness is already lost, he says, and even were he to

¹⁵ The verb *être* being conjugated with *avoir*, this mistake is similar in effect to the American "between her and I."

leave that woman, he could never find happiness with his family. He no longer brings home anything but anxiety, irritation, discord.

"I have tried it out: during the fortnight I spent away from that woman I never stopped thinking of her. She has me in her grip." And naively, cynically, he contrasts the two atmospheres: his own, where an infirm and aging wife awaits harassed by worries; the other, where he finds joy, youth, caresses, tenderness, and all that goes with it. But he is held especially by jealousy. That other woman is not faithful to him; he knows it, has already had to "forgive" her; he has forced her to confess, to repent, to promise. He wants to get to the bottom of it. He will go back to see her Thursday.

"And you will forgive her again," I say.

Whereupon he exclaims:

"No, no; after the promises she made me, I'll not forgive again: I'll kill rather."

"Come, Monsieur B., you are not going to do anything silly. . . ."

"That depends; I'll not give my word about anything. I know I am no longer my own master. When I am with her again, I am capable of anything."

"Don't go, then."

"I cannot not go."

"Is she expecting you?"

"She is not expecting me. I want to take her by surprise. Next Thursday I shall be off. I'll go home, just time enough to dress. . . ."

"Mme B. will try to keep you."

"Nothing will hold me back. I'll go. And if I find her with the other . . ."

"You will ask her to forgive you for having taken her by surprise."

"No, no; I have told her: I'll kill her."

This conversation lasted more than an hour, but with many repetitions, and especially this one:

"If I went back to the family now, it would not be the same thing. My wife would forgive me; she says so. But henceforth there is a gulf between us. And as for the other one, I could never forget her."

I had soon to admit to myself that whatever reasonable or affectionate argument I could invoke was of no weight, no importance to a man who was so *possessed*.

1 March

I am beginning the fourth volume of *Clarissa Harlowe*..

8 March

At Vence after a delightful week at Roquebrune; but almost incapable of work and obsessed by the feeling of the little time left me to live and of all I should still like to write. . . .

I must admit to myself that Vence does not at all come up to my expectation and that I am desperately eager to be elsewhere. Of what little advantage are all these clings to the past! . . .

A tree trying to hang on to its dead leaves.

Fifth volume of *Clarissa*.

Before leaving Paris, I had gone to rue de Villejust.¹⁶ Saw Valéry; for the first time in months and years, *not tired*, not out of patience, in full possession of himself, fully *realized* so to speak, and filling his character to the very limits. In the course of the conversation he even said only once his customary "Furthermore I don't give a damn" (apropos of his article on women's suffrage which had just appeared in the *Revue de Paris* — a most remarkable article that I was not able to read until I got to Roquebrune).

I cannot help regretting, oh, quite selfishly, that Valéry has never made an effort to understand me better, and that the impression he has of me remains so substantially the same, the very one that Pierre Louÿs must have had at the time of our worst disagreements. To him, to them I represented the Protestant, the moralist, the puritan, the sacrificer of form to idea, the anti-artist, the enemy. I do not know how, despite that, there remained in Valéry's heart rather than in his mind so true a friendship for me. He has given me as many opportunities to assure myself of it as to assure myself also of his lack of understanding.

But of this I have merely been able to suffer without ever harboring resentment for the fact that the clever construction of his mind had to exclude what constituted my justification and my life. Yet a more penetrating examination would, it seems to me, have readily shown him that our divergences are, after all, less *essential* than he may believe, than he insists on believing. Consequently, by very different paths to be sure, I constantly agree with him and subscribe to almost everything he writes, for which I most often feel nothing but an unlimited admiration.

Vence, 15 March

I remember Flaubert's despair and rage as a result of some favor or other he had allowed himself to be persuaded to beg of . . . Grévy, I believe. It seemed to him that, by this inconsistent act, the whole perfect integrity of his career had been compromised. To what disastrous consequences the most inconsequential and inconsistent act can lead! Likewise, I cannot forgive myself that single interview with

¹⁶ For more than twenty years Valéry lived at 40 rue de Villejust, which has been rebaptized since his death as rue Paul Valéry.

Lang to which I was unwise and weak enough to lend myself two years ago.¹⁷ Now Grasset, in order to launch Duvernois's latest book, serves up some remarks from it, giving them a shameless publicity. Impossible to protest against this abuse. I have nothing but enemies in "the press" and the journalists would find a way of turning that protest into a disavowal of words I cannot deny having said.

Duvernois writes me now that he wants to send to *Candide* an article expressing all the gratitude he owes me. It is my turn to be "grateful." That insistence can only compromise me further. It creates between us that air of cliquishness against which I have resisted all my life. The affair is making so much noise that the collapse of my resistance will be recalled much more than my resistance itself. And thus, despite myself, I find that I have done more for Duvernois than for any of my friends, than for any of those whose writings I like, esteem, and admire much more than his.

I have just read this book. A great deal of craftsmanship; dazzling cleverness in presentation; extraordinary gift of animating and subtly penetrating characters; truth to life in the tone of the dialogues. . . . Have I praised enough to dare to say how stifling the very atmosphere of the book is to me? It is a sample type of that Jewish literature which deserves to have its history written some day. Mendès, Tristan Bernard, Sternheim, Bernstein, Coolus, Hirsch, Croisset, etc. . . . whether dramatists or novelists, they all have this in common, that from their work all idea of nobility is excluded. It is a debasing literature. Each of them depicts man only as he becomes when he lets himself go; depicts only fallen creatures, derelicts.

If there is some excess in what I say, the abuse that is made of my "patronage" is the cause, and the irritation this arouses in me. Let me praise softly, without trying to take advantage of my praise, and I shall not try to deny having praised. What I said of *Edgar* I still think; but to display my praise for publicity amounts to magnifying it exag-

¹⁷ This interview with André Lang, which originally appeared in *L'Opinion* in 1929, was republished in Lang's *Tiers de Siècle* (*Third of a Century*). After some remarks about Gide's early career, Lang reports that he said: "I bought *Edgar* a few months ago, by chance, on the station platform in Carcassonne. I did not know Duvernois. At once I got my friends to read that novel. What an odd case is that of a writer who seems *commercial* and is consequently scorned by a certain public that doesn't know him. It is hard to imagine a more unfair situation. For what Duvernois writes—which often contains exceptionally good touches, and I know what I am saying—is not designed for the public he addresses and reaches. He is too subtle and delicate to please them. As a result, he fails to satisfy those who read him, and those he ought to reach do not read him."

gerately. And I am not protesting against the praise itself but against the disproportion it owes to that magnifying.

And, besides, *Les Sœurs Hortensia* is far from being up to *Edgar*.¹⁸

16 March

But this evening I just happen to find on the table in the hotel drawing-room a supplement to *L'Illustration* for 1928 containing a short story by Duvernois: *L'Invité*, which I read at once.

Decidedly I have no reason to be ashamed of having praised a writer capable of such exquisite pages. What grace and sharpness in the dialogue! What fantasy and what rightness of tone! And what an odd mixture of the comic and the poetic! Nothing more alert or more sensible can be imagined. . . .

At this point Roger Martin du Gard interrupts me: "You will find on all sides in popular literature many examples of this type, all as successful as this one. And they surprise you only because you live in another world and have a natural need to admire what is least like you. But, take my word for it, there are recipes for cooking up soufflés like this; and nothing is easier to do, and nothing falls more readily — except perhaps the slight taste you yourself have for such dishes."

But I am not quite sure that he is altogether right on all these points.

Grasse, 16 March

Since I have made up my mind to write perhaps nothing but post-humous works, I no longer have any desire to write anything at all.

17 March

In the critical appendix to *Clarissa Harlowe* (Volume V, p. 524) Richardson considers the small part that the preoccupation with an afterlife plays in dramatic poetry.¹⁹ "He considered, that the Tragic poets have as seldom made their heroes true objects of pity, as the Comic theirs laudable ones of imitation: and still more rarely have made them in their deaths look forward to a *future Hope*. And thus, when they die, they seem totally to perish. Death, in such instances, must appear terrible. It must be considered as the greatest evil."

The Christian ideal . . . yes, but the Greco-Latin ideal played just as important a part (taking the word in its English sense) in our formation. The astonishing thing is that we tried to join these two utterly different formative elements to the point of almost confusing them in

¹⁸ Duvernois's *Edgar* was first published in 1919, and his *Hortensia Sisters* in 1931.

¹⁹ In the course of the book he quotes especially Shakespeare and Dryden. [A.]

a single "tradition." And yet they are almost opposed. But probably from that very discordance comes the value of our culture, the breadth of its development. Now that I am striving to free myself from that tradition (and no progress is possible otherwise), I note that the Greek ideal, in contrast to the Christian ideal, had no less domination over my mind — so that the best weapons for liberating myself from the Christian ideal I seek, as a Christian, and find in Greek paganism. The Oriental arts, however, teach us that the Greek splendor is but one among many of the forms of beauty. But the formation of my mind (and my heredity doubtless) makes me much less sensitive to any manifestation of human nobility that is not tempered by the reason. It is this tempering that constituted, for us, the persuasive force of Greek beauty. But how unwise to let the Reason dictate everything! The Christian ideal is opposed to this; and the Greek, even. . . . We are at an age when everything must be challenged anew.

Humanity can make no progress without shaking off the yoke of authority and tradition.

18 March

Finished *Clarissa*.

For the third time (I believe it may even be the fourth) I gather up my strength to launch into Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, for I have been told that one must get beyond the beginning. But what can I think of a book of which I read attentively the first seventy pages without being able to find a single line somewhat firmly drawn, a single personal thought, emotion, or sensation, the slightest enticement for the heart or mind to invite me to go on?

Went as far as page 115 with great effort. Illegible. Yet I have plenty of pluck for reading. I cannot even understand how there were people able to go on.²⁰

19 March

The itch from which I have suffered for months (or, but with interruptions, for years) has recently become unbearable and, for the last few nights, has almost completely kept me from sleeping.

Besides, nothing appears on the outside; immediately under the skin, it is like a poison that wants to come out; an injection of extract of bedbugs. Can it get any more intense? It doesn't seem so. But it can enlarge, spread to the whole body. . . .

I think of Job looking for a piece of glass with which to scratch

²⁰ This passage is particularly piquant when one recalls that *Point Counter Point* was deeply influenced by, not to say modeled upon, Gide's *Faux Monnayeurs*.

himself, and of Flaubert, whose correspondence, in the last part of his life, speaks of similar itchings. I tell myself that each of us has his sufferings and that it would be most unwise to long to change them; but I believe that a real pain would take less of my attention and would after all be more bearable. And, in the scale of sufferings, a real pain is something nobler, more august; the itch is a mean, unconfessable, ridiculous malady; one can pity someone who is suffering; someone who wants to scratch himself makes one laugh.

In the morning, after an almost sleepless night, I get up without any enthusiasm whatsoever, my brain beclouded as after (I suppose) smoking opium; lacking virtue, zeal, or appetite for work; longing to be at Cuverville, where I could put myself on a milk diet for a time; ready to drag miserably through the day.

20 March

As if, beyond pains or itches, there were nothing to bother a man! The last few nights I was intrigued by strange moans coming from the next room. Kept awake myself by the itching, I noticed that they did not cease all night long. They did not exactly bother me, thanks to the wads I put in my ears at night, but I should have liked to know what it was.

And yesterday evening, coming back from dinner and on the point of entering my room, I am stopped by my neighbor, who was waiting at his door. He is a little man, perhaps no older than I, but so worn out, so worn down that it seems as if death has almost nothing to take from him.

He wants to beg my pardon for the disturbance his groans may have caused me. He is suffering from asthma and emphysema and cannot keep from moaning. All this said in English in the most courteous way. I protest at once that he does not disturb me at all and that he can moan all he wants; pity him cordially and leave him with the wish that he may have a somewhat better night.

Doubtless, compared with his anguish, my itch is nothing at all. Let us live with our sufferings and not want to change them. These wise reflections allowed me to sleep a bit better.

I definitely drop Huxley's book, in which I cannot get interested. Mme Théo very ingeniously compared it to Maucclair's *Couronne de clarté*.²¹ There is probably more intelligence in Huxley, but just as much rubbish.

I buy *Mes Routes* by Lasserre,²² in which is the best judgment I

²¹ *Crown of Light*, a novel first published in 1895.

²² *My Paths*, which first appeared in 1924, is a collection of articles previously published in reviews.

have ever read on Rostand; and *Les Annales* for the beginning of the Comtesse de Noailles's *Mémoires*. Indescribable exaggeration of all the worst extravagance that literary and feminine infatuation has ever produced.

21 March

Since I told him that he did not disturb me, my neighbor lets himself go and moans twice as much. Yet a rather good night; but I wore out my eyes by reading in a poor light. Almost as violent itches. And what a privation not to dare to plunge into a bath on getting up, not even to dare to wash oneself except most carefully!

Sky uniformly overcast. Yesterday, continuous rain. Went out nevertheless to go and buy *Eugénie Grandet*,²³ which I wanted to reread; plunged into it when I returned.

I have, however, finished writing *L'Histoire de Mulot*, which I have been carrying about in my head for so long;²⁴ but rather to get rid of it, as when cleaning house. I have never written anything less significant. This is perhaps a reason why it will be liked! . . . But I am by no means in a hurry to publish it.

22 March

My poor neighbor never ceases agonizing all night long. In the drawing-room (where I go to read after dinner, for the light is better than in my room and my eyes, which I have considerably abused the last few days, are rather tired) he puts in a timid appearance every evening; tiny, boiled down, browned like a potato, his head hunched between his shoulders; glances nervously to right and left as if looking for a sympathy that no one grants him; withdraws after ten minutes without having even opened a newspaper. He told me he had been a correspondent for several American papers. As soon as the season permits, he will go back to Le Mont-Dore to take the cure.

His continual groans considerably hinder my sleep; yet I do not dislike this *Memento mori*; and imagining his suffering helps me to put up better with my itch. But the irritated areas are enlarging, and spots of eczema are appearing on my face — extremely unpleasant. And to think that most likely there is some treatment I could take, something to be done . . . no knowing what. The doctors I have consulted know nothing about it.

Reread at one sitting *Eugénie Grandet*, which I had not looked at since the day when I devoured it, at the age of sixteen, in the barn at

²³ The novel by Balzac.

²⁴ *The Story of Mulot*, eventually entitled *Jeunesse* (Youth), was published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in September 1931.

La Roque. It is the first Balzac I ever read. It does not seem to me one of the best or to deserve at all the exceptional favor it enjoys. The writing is most ordinary, the characters very sketchily outlined, the dialogues conventional and often unacceptable,²⁵ or mechanically motivated by the characters. . . . The only thing that strikes me as masterful is the story of old Grandet's speculations; but this is perhaps partly because I am not competent in such matters.

In short, a certain dismay, which would delight Roger Martin du Gard; but I repeat to myself that, of Balzac, one should admire *La Comédie humaine* in its entirety rather than any particular novel. Yet there are some that, by themselves and taken alone, are wonderful. *Eugénie* is not one of those.

Marseille, 31 March

Greatly enjoyed seeing Saint Exupéry again at Agay, where I had gone to spend two days with P. Back in France barely a month now, he has brought back from Argentina a new book and a fiancée. Read one, seen the other. Congratulated him heartily, but more for the book; I hope the fiancée is as satisfactory. . . .²⁶

Tonio's stories are so strange and gripping that I should like to note them down at the moment of hearing them. He talks to us at length of his brother-pilot Guillaumet. Guillaumet was on the air-mail route from X. to Y. (?); there had been no news of him for six days. It was said that his plane had been caught in a storm while crossing the Andes; he must have fallen in the mountains, in a particularly inaccessible, unknown region, to which none of the inhabitants that the company had tried to send out searching for him had been willing to venture. . . .

Tonio de Saint Exupéry was dining in a big hotel in Buenos Aires when the news began to spread: Guillaumet was alive, had been found. The emotion was so great that everyone got up and embraced one another. Tonio saw him soon after and plans to write the story that Guillaumet told him of his amazing adventure.

The plane had come down in the snow at an altitude of nearly ten thousand feet. The storm was so violent that he had first to wait for forty-eight hours in the shelter he had dug under the plane. If he had

²⁵ "You must be hungry, Cousin," said Eugénie. . . .

"Well, I could eat something light, such as a chicken or a partridge."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Nanon." [A.]

²⁶ At this time Antoine de Saint Exupéry was known only for *Courrier sud* (*Southern Mail*). The book he had just brought back was certainly *Vol de nuit* (*Night Flight*), which appeared in 1931 with a preface by Gide. The story about Guillaumet now forms a part of *Terre des hommes* (*Wind, Sand and Stars*), which first came out in 1939.

not been alone, he would have lost his life, for a comrade would not have had his extraordinary resistance and Guillaumet would not have wanted to leave him. . . . Fortunately he had on him a small pocket compass that his chief had by chance given him a few days before. Neither rope nor piolet. No experience of mountain-climbing. No hope of getting out alive. And the thing that first made him set out was the desire to leave his body clearly visible, for it occurred to him that his widow would have to wait four years before getting his insurance if there were any question of his being dead. But as long as he was walking, he might as well go toward salvation. And once on the way . . .

Nothing with which to warm himself. Nothing to eat. . . . But, above all, the great preoccupation of not going to sleep. To rest he chose rocks with such a slope that he could cling to them only when awake. Terrible temptation to let oneself go to sleep. The lure of the snow-fields; voluptuous torpor. . . . The third day, he slid to the bottom of a ravine, from which he gets out completely soaked. He has the constancy to go back, climbing a three-thousand-foot slope in order to dry himself in the first rays of the sun. And for four days, no food. He fears losing control of his thoughts and concentrates his entire will on the *choice* of those thoughts!

Courage in this case lies not in risking one's life, but on the contrary . . .

All this is what Tonio is to relate. I ask to go over his story, for I shall never forgive him for spoiling it. What our present literature most lacks is heroism.

My ear, or some even more subtle precision-balance or other, remains just as hard to please. One foot more or less to my sentence and it shocks me like a bad line of verse. I cannot endure being quoted wrongly (as so often), even if it were with the best intention in the world.

Paris, 10 April

Back in Paris two days now. Bad work at Vence, at Grasse, at Saint-Clair. . . . My idle brain manufactures gloom, disgust, boredom, and the call of spring finds no reply in my heart. Unfaithful to myself and to all my rules of life, I suffer from a limitless liberty without employment. Any occupation whatever that tied me down would be welcome. I have often noticed how an obligation facilitates happiness in me; a task to be accomplished. I shall not recover myself without discipline. This is where religious practices triumph. The thinking creature with himself alone as an end suffers from an abominable void. Travel is but a numbing. I have reached the age when I should like the best from myself. I get nothing, and I have forgotten how to demand.

23 April

Reached Cuverville yesterday afternoon. Have felt much better the last three days. It seems that the itching gave way before the mere threat of Sourdel's treatment, like a toothache at the dentist's door. The itching had become unbearable of late. But I dare not yet rejoice. Still, two somewhat better nights and my inner azure reappears.

25 April

Good piano-practice. Managed to perfect seven of Chopin's *Nocturnes*.

Adrienne Monnier has had the kindness to send me *La Vie de Milarépa*,²⁷ whose praises she and Jean Schlumberger were singing. "It is more beautiful than the Gospel," she said, "you will see." But I remain altogether recalcitrant. Likewise (or almost as much) toward the Japanese *No* dramas, of which Jean also sends me a volume, in English translation (Arthur Waley).

30 April

Increasing lack of self-confidence. I shall end up by no longer daring to write anything at all.

2 May

Does not the extraordinary difficulty I find in expressing myself today come also from the fact that no imaginary character any longer inhabits me and that I am trying to speak in my own name? I am inclined to believe this, and that the best way of conquering this impotence (I was about to say: this aphasia) would be to invent again some responsible hero (taking care to endow him with a certain gift of speech!). Not very clever if I cannot succeed in this.

The typing up of my old journals, which has kept me busy since I have been at Cuverville, plunges me into an indescribable distaste for myself.

10 May

The itchings from which I had been suffering for months having become unbearable of late, especially at night — I have made up my mind to undergo a treatment of autohemotherapy; the height of narcissism. Every day Dr. Sourdel takes some blood from my arm and injects it into my thigh. And this, which is to go on for three weeks, keeps me in Paris. I have reached the third inoculation. Is it already the

²⁷ The book known in English as *Tibet's Great Yogi, Milarepa: A Biography from the Tibetan, being the Jetsün-kahbum*. Milarepa (or Milarespa) lived in the eleventh century.

effect of the treatment? I am getting back a little sleep and enjoyment of life. Better work, hopes, projects, etc. . . . and longing to travel. Splendid weather for the last three days after a long return of winter.

But nothing yet to say in this notebook; my inner life has not resumed and I am living only on the surface.

13 May

Lunched the day before yesterday at Sèvres, at the Bertaux', with J. Schlumberger, the Thomas Manns, and the Soupaults. I did not yet know Thomas Mann, who had been so kind to me on several occasions that I could not decently ignore his being in Paris. Meeting under excellent circumstances, which I am happy to owe to Bertaux. Very good lunch; most cordial atmosphere; natural and sprightly conversation. It was perfect.

Thomas Mann and especially his wife speak French perfectly. Moreover their pronunciation, when they express themselves in German, is so distinct that not a word escaped me.

I liked both of them enough to be eager to see them again. It seems to me that one can talk with him effortlessly of anything and everything.

Devout Spain²⁸ is burning her convents more ferociously than did ever the land of Voltaire. It can certainly be said that she richly deserves these excesses and that her ancient Inquisition prepared these long-range reprisals. And it would not even be necessary to go back so far. I doubt if that fury is a sign of real liberation, alas! There is something spasmodic about it that might well not last.

I should like to ask those who are shocked by such violences how a chick can get out of the egg without breaking the shell.

But above all I should like to live long enough to see Russia's plan succeed and the states of Europe obliged to accept what they insisted on ignoring. How could so novel a reorganization have been achieved without, first, a period of profound disorganization? Never have I bent over the future with a more passionate curiosity. My whole heart applauds that gigantic and yet entirely human undertaking.

Those who are most inclined to doubt of its success are precisely the *believers* who used to profess the greatest scorn for doubt as soon as it touched their religious convictions. They do not admit a faith so different in nature from their mystical faith. And faced with this miracle to be accomplished, a quite natural and practical miracle (so that it can be called a miracle only by misuse of the term), they play the

²⁸ Gide uses the expression "Satin Slipper Spain" because of Claudel's drama, *Le Soulier de satin* (1929), in which the heroine entrusts her satin slipper, as a symbol of her virtue, to a statue of the Virgin.

skeptics; but, here too, the first condition of the plan's success is to believe obstinately that it will succeed. Far from defying intelligence, it calls for intelligence, which must triumph in this case.

Arthur Fontaine, at whose house I lunched yesterday, told me that my Uncle Charles Gide was invited (it must have been before the war) by Souchon to encounter some eminent foreigners who wanted to meet him. The meal "produced" nothing, my uncle having exchanged but a few insignificant words and only with those seated next him. Everyone was expecting to hear him during the coffee. But after they had returned to the drawing-room, my uncle approached a small table in the corner of the room on which was a periodical, which he picked up and began to read, seated apart from the others. The guests waited, more or less patiently, for the end of that ill-timed reading, which lasted until my uncle, finally deciding to speak, said:

"Why, this periodical is very interesting. I did not know it at all. . . . Have you the preceding number by any chance?"

Scorn? . . . Pride? . . . Certainly not, but rather, on the contrary, instinctive withdrawal when he was called upon to show off. And probably also a great difficulty in adapting to contingencies, to the rules of the game of life, and in fulfilling an expectation, he who never expected anything from others. Howbeit, no one was less affected, more spontaneous, more naïve. Not a thought in him for playing the role that was expected of him. I do not believe he ever looked at himself — any more, to be sure, than he looked at, or saw, others. Capable, indeed, of the most faithful attachments, but always somewhat *in abstracto*; yet as unpenetrating as he was impenetrable, except in the domain of ideas. Whence also the fact that no consideration of personal interest, either for himself or for others, could ever influence his thought or his conduct. I cannot imagine a human being who better commanded admiration or who more rebuffed sympathy.

In Mme B.'s drawing-room, where I feel that I have gone by mistake late today, a great gathering of society people. No less than three princesses. This is more than I can endure.

25 May²⁹

Took my pen to be repaired; it will take ten days, I was told. Good pretext for not writing. Moreover I have no desire to do so. My treatment (autohemotherapy) weakens me considerably. Spring afflicts me like a party to which I was not invited. I make an effort to advance this novel (*Geneviève*), without inclination, without any conviction

²⁹ Written in pencil. [A.]

save for the ideas I should like to bring out in it. Hateful method. I know it; I feel it; but what can I do about it? And everything I write of it seems to me flabby and without accent. Kept in Paris by my treatment for ten days more. . . . What shall I then go seek in the south? I have lost all confidence in myself.

At last the proofs of Fernandez's book.³⁰ I like particularly what he says of my intellectual need for scientific truth, by which I now know well that I distinguish myself from those of my generation and from most of those who follow me.

It is indeed the so-called "natural" or experimental sciences that are involved here, and not, as Fernandez takes care to point out, the so-called "pure" and deductive sciences.

I recognize the authenticity of this turn of mind in this: my little Catherine, at the age of four, had just bumped her head violently when coming out from under a table where she had been hiding. Instead of crying and complaining, she goes back to the place where she had been and repeats the action, slowly, so as to understand how she had happened to hurt herself.

1 June

Spent an hour yesterday evening at the Cirque Médrano. Profoundly demoralized by the public's delirious joy over a clown act, very badly performed and as stupid as possible; besides, openly filthy. Nothing to be done for . . . nothing to be hoped from . . . such a public. And nothing is more saddening for some (of whom I am one) than to belong — oh! despite oneself — to a select group and to be unable to deign communing with the vast majority of humanity. I remember my childish sobs when, for the first time, I felt "not like the others."

Marseille, 4 June

Those pages from Mauriac's *Journal* in the June *N.R.F.* no longer find any echo in my heart. I no longer even understand *what is concerned here*. "Even in the state of grace," he writes, "my creatures are born of the murkiest part of me; they are formed of what subsists in me in spite of myself." What a confession! This amounts to saying that if he were a perfect Christian, he would cease to have any material of which to make his novels. Is not this precisely what I told him?³¹

³⁰ The study by Ramon Fernandez entitled *André Gide* appeared in 1931.

³¹ On 24 April 1928 Gide had written Mauriac a letter inspired by the latter's *Life of Jean Racine*: "You rejoice in the fact that God, before seizing hold of Racine again, left him time to write his plays, to write them *despite* his conversion. In short, what you seek is permission to write *Destins*

How anguished he is! And how I like him thus! But what is the use of this anguish? May a time come for him when it will seem to him as vain and fanciful, as monstrous as it seems to me today.

But the mark is so deeply cut in him henceforth that he will think he is lost if he frees himself. The habit of living head-down forces one to see everything upside down. Any effort at righting the inverted image is imputed to pride. As if one could not be modest without bowing double! Or as if that natural modesty were not worth the modesty achieved through contortion!

And nothing is more sincere, most certainly, than these pages. Is not this just what makes them frightening? — that these torments, these struggles, these gratuitous, fanciful debates should become, for the believer, a real anguish; that authentically he should pity us for ceasing to know that anguish, for having escaped it, for being happy!

There was omitted from the periodical publication a page of that journal that Mauriac subsequently reinstated in the book, *Souffrances et bonheur du Chrétien*.³² That page concerns a reading of my *Voyage au Congo* and bears witness to an affection that will surprise, even infuriate, many of Mauriac's readers. I am only too well aware what courage it takes today to speak of me in certain environments without protesting in horror. Mauriac had already had this courage in the past.³³ How deeply those pages of his journal touch me and what an

[Mauriac's most recent novel at that moment]; permission to be a Christian without having to burn your books; and this is what makes you write them in such a way that, though a Christian, you will not have to disavow them. All this (this reassuring compromise that allows one to love God without losing sight of Mammon), all this gives us that anguished conscience which lends such charm to your face, such savor to your writings, and which must be so pleasing to those who, while abhorring sin, would be most unhappy if they had to cease being concerned with sin. You know moreover that this would be the end of literature, of yours in particular; and you are not sufficiently Christian to cease being a writer." It was this letter that caused Mauriac to write his essay *God and Mammon* (1929).

³² *Misery and Joy of the Christian*, first published as a book in 1931.

³³ Doubtless the most striking of those occasions was the preface Mauriac wrote for a reprinting of Gide's *La Tentative amoureuse* in 1922. It began: "Doubtless Claudel and Jammes, those good shepherd-dogs, scold and worry this lost sheep who carries his taste for conversion to the point of being converted every day to a different truth. Let us try, however, to understand in Gide a case of terrible sincerity: no trace in him of what Stendhal unjustly calls hypocrisy when he finds it in the men of the seventeenth century. It is true that the choice of a doctrine obliges us, at those moments when forces in us disown it, to continue doing it lip-service, until the return of grace. Gide is the man who would never be resigned to influencing, even for a moment, the automaton."

echo that affection finds in my heart is what I need to write down here, were it only for myself.

"And suddenly I am seized, not by Africa, but by this Gide so different from what the journalists have written of him, so human, so close to the earth. . . . His wonder before stones, plants, insects — nothing I admire more and *from which I feel farther removed*." Nothing is better designed than the study of natural sciences to cure us of that anguish to which the pursuit of a metaphysical, inaccessible God necessarily leads. But those to whom that studious contemplation would be most advantageous turn away from it, and from the *reality* that their very anguish, and the belief in another reality, urge them to consider as merely a disappointing mirage (they arm and defend themselves against its attraction), an illusion. Yet there lies the only truth that man can achieve and embrace with some certainty, the patient study of which can bring about some progress for humanity. Those who strive to see with "the eyes of the soul" are those who have never really known how to observe.

(Charlie Du Bos, translating with Élisabeth Van Rysselberghe a passage from Keats's correspondence which concerned "snails' horns," was astonished and asked her on what part of the body snails had horns and confessed that he thought he had never seen snails.)

There are here two needs of the mind, so different that he who lacks one of them cannot understand the embarrassment this deficiency can cause to others.

But we do not adore the same God. And the only one in which I can believe, diffuse in nature, I am willing to grant them that he no longer deserves the name of God. In order to be seen by us, he does not ask for faith, but merely for attention. His mystery is all the greater for being in no way supernatural.

Saint-Clair, 9 June

Left Paris the 4th, traveling with Robert Levesque, who is returning from leave; charming companion, for whom my affection becomes deeper month by month. Nothing is more confident, more naturally joyous and *good* than his smile. He bestows indistinctly on everything likable on this earth a panting affection. I accompany him to Toulon the next day. And I wind up at Saint-Clair, waiting from hour to hour and from day to day for the new car that is to take me to Roquebrune by way of Vence, where I am to find Herbart. Maddening delay, which may cut short my stay at Roquebrune.

I feel much better since the autohemotherapy treatment that I have just finished got rid of my itch. The last few months it had become insufferable. I have again found some joy in life.

I passed on to Robert L. the *Ecce Homo* that I have just reread in

the new translation (very good, it seemed to me) with the greatest emotion. Every time I pick up Nietzsche again, it seems to me that nothing remains to be said and that it is enough to quote him.

I seek in Renan's volumes on the history of Christianity, I seek in vain for some explanation or commentary of the mentions of the Cross in the Gospels before the crucifixion. This point seems to me, however, of great importance, even though today I turn my mind away from such questions and refuse to grant them that importance which they had, only recently, in my eyes. Simply, if those passages were interpolated, it could only be to purge the crucifixion of any appearance of accident and, incorporating it in the predestined life of the "Saviour," to base on it the significance of Christ's teaching. In this case, the cross, far from interrupting that teaching, becomes its very aim, its explanation and perfect consummation. It is *in order to be crucified* that Christ comes on earth, and to save us by this indispensable sacrifice toward which his whole life led him. Any effort to detach Christ from that necessary cross thenceforth becomes outrageous, for it would reduce his mission to nothing. In order to see merely an accident in the crucifixion, as I tried to do, one must first take away Christ's divinity.

The interpolated passages are of particular help to them, having been put there to supply the need it was felt might arise. They are useful, in the manner of Colonel Henry's forgery;³⁴ but they contribute to the ruin of the edifice as soon as they are recognized as false.

Roquebrune, 12 June

The novel requires a certain slowness of progress that allows the reader to live with the characters and become accustomed to them. If they do things and make remarks that, knowing them, we might just as well have been able to invent for them, this does not matter; and we are even amused to recognize them in such things and not to be surprised. When I wanted to tell of them only what is disconcerting, and leave to the reader the duty of filling out their characters with everything that did not particularly distinguish them, I was probably not well advised. It may seem that I did not know how to make them come alive because I so readily gave them up as soon as their outline was sufficiently sketched, and when portraying them more fully and following them at greater length told nothing more about them. This is because I have always been bothered in the work of others by all that is not essential and that the alert reader's imagination can supply for itself. A concern for the lightest possible baggage has always tormented me, and I do not like to let time make that abstract of the essentials

³⁴ The forged document produced in 1898 to justify the verdict against Captain Dreyfus in the famous Dreyfus affair.

which I can just as well achieve at once. Allow only the indispensable to subsist was the rule I imposed on myself — nowhere more difficult and dangerous to apply than for the novel. This amounts to counting too much on that collaboration which the reader will supply only when the writer has already been able to secure it.

14 June

What they are to want has been chosen for them. And that it is the best will not be questioned. No time, no effort devoted to its pursuit, which they would consider wasted time. It is precisely to this that the best part of us is given, is devoted.

It is no longer a matter of restoring ruins, but of building anew on a ground that must first be tested. Everything must be questioned, doubted again; nothing must be accepted but the authentic, from which all mysticism is banished. I mean by mysticism: any blind belief.

16 June

Nietzsche again. His "eternal return. . . ." My mind stumbles on it and can get nothing good from it. The mystic reveals himself cautiously here. Unverifiable hypothesis in which the need of an afterlife and of eternity takes refuge.

That resumption *ab ovo* of the long destiny of our earth makes all progress illusory. And history cannot, all the same, begin all over again without the course of events being fatal. How much more comforting is the idea of different possibilities and thinking that perhaps some other inhabitable planet has managed to achieve greater happiness!

I prefer to suppose that, rather than repeating that same history, an infinite number of other histories will be tried out; to suppose even some progress from one to another, if indeed all or nothing can or must begin over again. . . . A world in which Cleopatra's nose was shorter and the face of the world was changed. . . .

And who can tell us, besides, that this beginning all over again must take place only in the future? That everything has not already taken place? Or that everything has not taken place several times simultaneously? That this infinite repetition creates a sort of everlastingness for each of its transitory states? But what does it matter to us, consequently, whether we are present at the first or the thousandth performance of this show? What does the quantity of these repetitions matter to us if we cannot be aware of their number? Throughout time's infinity these exact repetitions are juxtaposed and are equal to unity. And little do I care that I am one day to relive, or that I am already reliving this very instant when I am writing these lines. Nothing is more gratuitous or more vain than such a hypothesis. It adds nothing to Nietzsche's

system, and I can only take the sort of enthusiasm he shows for it as a sign of his incipient madness.

Evolution of my thought? Without a first Christian formation (or deformation), there would perhaps have been no evolution at all. What made it so slow and difficult was the sentimental attachment to what I could not cast off without regret. Even today I still have a sort of nostalgia for that mystical and ardent climate in which my being was then inflamed. I have never again recaptured the fervor of my adolescence, and the sensual ardor in which I subsequently delighted is but its ridiculous imitation. At least so it appears to me, now that my senses are aging. Oh, how easy it would be for me, even today, to write emotional remarks on this subject that my reason would disown tomorrow! Nothing is easier than to stir to emotion when one does not hesitate to talk nonsense. It is illusion that permits the lyricism of childhood. My whole effort has been to achieve in myself a happiness that could do without being illusory.

Then, to be sure, my youth had much to do with it; the wild beating of a new heart; my love. . . . I could nourish that religious fervor only with what soon appeared to me as *inadmissible*.

Without that Christian formation, without those bonds, without Em., who oriented my pious inclinations, I should not have written *André Walter*, or *L'Immoraliste*, or *La Porte étroite*, or *La Symphonie pastorale*, etc. . . . or even, perhaps, *Les Caves du Vatican* and *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* as a revolt and a protest. . . . But what else I should have written in their place is utterly impossible for me to imagine. Would the lack of a crisis have been necessarily an impoverishment? It is quite useless to ask myself this, and the question must go unanswered.

Avignon, 19 June

Happy to find Roger Martin du Gard quite rejuvenated by the long rest he had to take following his accident. Excellent three-hour conversation. I accompany him to the station whence a little train takes him back this evening to Sauveterre and, alone, I dine very badly near the other station, where I wait for the train to Paris.

The most important scientific discoveries result from the patient observation of little subsidiary facts, so particular, so slight, tipping the scale so imperceptibly, that until then no one deigned to take them into account.

20 June

Most certainly sentiments also age; there are fashions even in our way of suffering or loving. It is also because almost always some affec-

tation and convention are added to the emotion that seems most sincere to us:

There is always a touch of display among the tears

La Fontaine wrote delightfully and most wisely.³⁵ It is this added display that ages the expression of sorrow and makes it seem antiquated. It is even very unwise to state that the most direct sensation, I mean the least interpreted, is the same. I am thinking of the "*Et violæ nigræ sunt*"³⁶ that Virgil translates from Theocritus, which allowed it to be inferred that at that time the eye did not yet distinguish among the ultra-blue tones. A time will come perhaps when the ultra-violet tones will become perceptible to us. And if this supposition seems somewhat risky, at least I cannot doubt that in the domain of sounds the human ear has sharpened itself extraordinarily, delighting today in relationships long held to be indiscernibly cacaphonous. I cannot resist noting how precious and subtle must have seemed at first the remarks by which the ancients seem closest to us today. The "smiling through his tears" of Homer (find the Greek text), the "*surgit aliquid amare*," etc. This is because beside the artificial and verbal preciousness there is a sincere preciousness due to a more exact and almost scientific observation of slight facts, which owes its appearance of preciousness simply to the fact that it is opposed to the conventional, to the too readily accepted. I believe that the thing that ages least in a writer is what seemed in his time to be the most rare, the most exceptional, the boldest, if, however, that exceptional element is the product of a direct and sincere observation.

Fine sentiments are three quarters of the time "ready-made" sentiments. The true artist, conscientiously, tailors only to measure.

21 June

I wrote the preceding page in the train taking me back to Paris.

Favored by a somewhat different social state, a time will come, I fancy, when the manifestations of love will be profoundly modified. The chaste reserve of virgins owes its importance in great part to the valuation the male sets upon it; his jealousy maintains its market value. For a Sovietized Russian it may be displeasing (it is displeasing to me) to see a valuable man risk his life for a bit of gristle. How the notion of honor differs from one country to another and from one epoch to another! I admire Mme de Lambert writing to her son: "Indulge only in the follies that amuse you." This implies that most of men's actions, even those not prompted by interest, allow themselves to be influenced by the fact that others are watching, by vanity, by fashion. . . . There

³⁵ *Toujours un peu de faste entre parmi les pleurs* is line 38 of "The Matron of Ephesus" in La Fontaine's *Tales*, Book V, 6.

³⁶ "And violets are black." Virgil: *Bucolics*, X, 39.

is a profound sincerity much harder to achieve and much rarer than simply that of expression. Some people go through life without ever experiencing a really sincere feeling; they do not even know what it is. They imagine they love, hate, suffer; their very death is an imitation.

23 June

At Cuverville; but only for two days. The house is not yet ready to receive me and I must again change my plans. But I could not go longer without seeing Em., whom I knew to have come back very tired from her visit to Pernand and her stay in Paris. Long ago I gave up really *settling down* anywhere; but when I think to what a degree this forced dislocation of my life is prejudicial to work, I sometimes find it very hard not to feel somewhat sad. I cannot undertake anything consecutive.

I had trouble leaving the glorious summer of the south. Here I return to the cold. Em. lights a fire morning and evening. What a climate! The fogs that keep the trees in the orchard from bearing any fruit prevent my thought too from "setting." But nowhere more suave singing of the birds. We hear the expression of that joy; just as every evening at Roquebrune the fireflies told of their delight in living, through a spasmodic sparkling. Probably, with other senses, the jubilation of many creatures now mute to us would become perceptible to us.

I am making an effort to get into that monument of boredom, the latest number of *Vigile*. What a lesson can be drawn from the ensemble of these lucubrations and their monotony! It is a warning concert. Yet I read with attention and almost with pleasure Ghéon's *Mozart*. If Charlie Du Bos, who dismisses Mozart, reads these pages, he will be unable to keep from thinking that every one of Ghéon's arguments could be turned against his thesis. For after all, if that perfect Nietzschean dancer is always "play-acting," and divinely, how can one fail to think that the perfect artist was "putting on" the religious feeling of his Masses, and even that sudden gravity, not so different from other, quite deliberately Olympian parts of his work? He was asked for Masses and he provided them. No one asked him for the *Jupiter Symphony*. In this case Charlie shows himself to be much more perspicacious and more . . . fair than Ghéon. But Ghéon, unable to give up Mozart, annexes him as Charlie is trying to annex Keats, whom he cannot, after all, give up. For, not being able to allow oneself to like anything that is not Catholic, etc. . . .

I have finally managed to get the little pamphlet: *Un Malfaiteur: André Gide*³⁷ which served as the pretext for Mauclair's bitter article

³⁷ *An Evil-doer: André Gide.*

that I read recently, on the first page of *La Petite Gironde*, I believe. A mass of unfounded charges, inexact quotations, virulent attacks (and just as much against Barrès, Brunschvicg, and even Claudel — as against me; but Maclair uses only the latter). A part of the pamphlet is signed: "Archbishop of Beaumont, happily deceased": . . . in short, a fabrication. Maclair accepted likewise and enjoyed spreading abroad in the past the most infamous calumnies against the *N.R.F.* There is nothing to be done about this: if *L'Ennemie des rêves*³⁸ had been better, Maclair would not bear me so much ill will.

Not admit that there is no adaptation between this world and me. It takes some self-satisfaction, to be sure. I shall do my share, of course; but, Nature, have you not greatly contributed to this yourself!

It is not in suffering, in adversity, that my optimism finds a stumbling-block, but in the ugliness and maliciousness of men.

It is enough to discourage goodwill and make a laughing-stock of all self-immolation, all sacrifice.

I was not yet twenty years old when this shocking truth had already occurred to me: that the very act of sacrifice magnifies the one who sacrifices himself to the point where his sacrifice is much more costly to humanity than would have been the loss of those for whom he is sacrificing himself. But in his abnegation lies the secret of his grandeur. On the immolation of the best is built the whole theater of antiquity; Nietzsche very well understood this.

30 June

In the July issue of the *N.R.F.* some dialogues by Jouhandeau between Godeau and Véronique.³⁹ Among the best pages he has ever written — filled with a tender beauty that at one and the same time consoles and throws one into despair. I can like Jouhandeau only when he is perfect; but when he is, I like him passionately.

New article by Massis in *La Revue universelle* about Marcel Arland. Odd how impossible it is for Massis to quote a text exactly or without distorting its meaning. And that does not bother him. Were we to treat him in the same way, he would protest. And I cannot say that he grants himself what he could not grant us (since he is fighting in a holy cause) and that all means seem to him good to overcome us (since for him it is not a matter of being right against us, but rather of getting the

³⁸ *The Enemy of Dreams*, a book by Camille Maclair.

³⁹ Entitled *Veronica*.

better of us).⁴⁰ No, I believe even that he is not aware that he is distorting; and so convinced is he of having right on his side that he cares very little about an error in detail. . . . And I think that it is this slight concern for exactitude, this lack of critical spirit, that allows him to maintain his conviction. He is not necessarily in bad faith. He is a believer who feels no more need of examining the texts he uses as evidence than of examining his belief. Thus, despite all his distortions, he appears as an honest man in the eyes of many readers not very scrupulous themselves or gifted with insufficient critical spirit and persuaded in advance; and perhaps in his own eyes.

One wonders upon seeing certain books: Who can read them? — Upon seeing certain people: What can they read? — Then eventually the two fit together.

Those who always seek their comfort, settling in the "best way possible": great sign of mediocrity.

Munich, 1 July

Frightful monotony of these *Cahiers* of Barrès (Volume III).⁴¹ A mind on the leash, always circling round its kennel. He attached his collar himself; but Taine helped him greatly in this.

The doctor whom Em. had come to consult in Paris said to her at once:

"You must have had very delicate hands."

. . . She had the most exquisite hands that can be imagined. I loved them especially, not merely as a part of her, but in themselves. She convinces herself and tries to convince me that her hands lost their shape naturally; but there is more to it: she deformed them by misusing them, by making them undertake coarse duties for which they were not made and which Em. assumed out of modesty, abnegation, maceration, and for many virtuous reasons that would have made me look with horror on the spirit of sacrifice. And it was the same with her mind, gifted with the most exquisite and rarest qualities, suited for the most delicate preoccupations. Her natural humility would not admit that she could be superior in anything and thus she condemned herself to the most ordinary occupations, in which nevertheless her superiority was obvious. From witnessing, powerless, this progressive renunciation,

⁴⁰ Here a play on words is lost: "*non d'avoir raison contre nous, mais d'avoir raison de nous.*"

⁴¹ *My Notebooks* by Maurice Barrès appeared posthumously in eleven volumes from 1929 to 1938, edited by his son, Philippe Barrès. Volume III covers the period from May 1902 to November 1904.

which she even refused to recognize, I suffered unspeakably. Had I complained of this, she would have said that all these superiorities I saw her relinquishing existed merely in my loving imagination. She really believed this and in this revealed herself to be superior to those very superiorities which her virtue esteemed so little.

"Intention to destroy all religion." In a meeting of the Comité National d'Études (16 March 1931), of which I am reading the report; painfully but most cordially on their side.

When writing these words, how can I fail to think of Em.? Because of her these words ring false. But by now it is only because of her.

Persecutions have always been (or almost), up to now, in the name of a religion. Religion now finds it monstrous that free-thought should take its turn to persecute. But can it really be said that there is persecution? I always find it hard to believe what someone has so much interest in making us believe. The last bits of testimony of that meeting fully contradict the first, and the first are but hearsay. But they call "persecution" forbidding priests the right to manipulate the brains of children. This is certainly because they know that never can the first mark be effaced, or only with the greatest effort, of which but a very small number are capable.

Oh, how well off everything would be if we dealt with Christ! But religion is not Christ, it is the priest.

What is more hollow, more stupidly sonorous, than the sentence with which Reverend Father R. de J. closes his declaration: ". . . There exist unalterable principles on which doubt is not permitted." Humanity makes, and can make, no progress without shaking up somewhat these very good souls.

Saturday

Morning spent altogether in wheedling a bad headache, which I dragged about all day yesterday and which hardly let me sleep all night. Motor trip to the Starnberger See, where I am taken by the family of Thomas Mann, whom I have the greatest pleasure seeing again. The two youngest children, gloriously handsome, go with us, and Klaus, whom I scarcely knew at all. All charming; Mme Mann particularly. But, the headache making my mind obdurate, I have the bad grace to maintain the contrary of her opinion — namely, that butterflies are not transformed into caterpillars, which would be too discouraging.

Strange, that disposition to stubbornness that a headache produces. Likewise, at the dinner following Thomas Mann's reading at the university, seated between Thomas Mann and Bruno Frank, whose conversation is very pleasant, I uphold against both of them my opinion that, besides the monologue of *Prometheus*, there exists a little drama

in three acts containing that monologue, and that this little drama is not *Pandora*; furthermore that the translation of Hafiz by Hammer was the very one that Goethe had read and that had inspired him to write his *Divan*. Verify this.⁴² But, however sure one is, it is not very courteous to . . .

And was it the headache also that made me leave a very insufficient tip when paying for my dinner?⁴³ Most cordial atmosphere of that gathering; it seems to me that in France there would have been more restraint; in a literary gathering in France everyone remains somewhat "on his guard."

Mann had just read, in the great hall of the university, two chapters from his *Joseph* (in composition still), which I was very happy to understand well (thanks to the very clear and vibrant diction of Mann) and to admire. It even seems to me that Mann has never written anything better.

We have just learned that France accepts the Hoover plan;⁴⁴ she does so, alas, with such bad grace that one hesitates to be grateful to her for it and that she loses the undeniable moral advantage she might have had from this waiver.

Moreover, politicians can easily talk of "moral advantages," but they remain nicely convinced that all who believe in them are dupes.

The fear of darkening someone else's joy as soon as I am not in the best mood paralyzes me. If I am aware of being able to add to their joy, I am at my height.

Berlin, 5 July

Unable to eat anything for the last two days; rather violent headaches; most unpleasant state of semi-vertigo, semi-nausea. I remain in bed almost all day, dozing, dazed, in no wise interested in life.

Probably a sunstroke during the automobile ride with the Manns. Unable to sleep all night.

In Munich have not tried to see anything. I should not leave my hotel room were it not for the hope of some pleasant meeting. . . . Last night, if I had been able, by pushing a button, to be back in Paris . . . !

⁴² Indeed, Bruno Frank was confusing the translator of Hafiz with another Hammer, who lived much later, after Goethe. [A.]

⁴³ I was later told that I did not have to leave any at all. Yet I believe that in Munich service is not included in the bill, as it generally is in Berlin. [A.]

⁴⁴ In June 1931 President Hoover of the United States proposed a general moratorium of one year on reparations and war debts.

With what ease the most burning curiosity in me is followed by an almost total indifference! . . .

Read one after the other the first two volumes of *Fantomas*.⁴⁵ Who had told me the second was better than the first? . . .

Make up my mind to ask for a glass of milk at the terrace of the Kempinski. Should like to know of what it is made. Cannot drink more than a sip of it.

I admire those who are always up to their best, who never disappoint themselves. As for me, I can never count on myself. Whence my fear of meetings, of appointments . . .

But at least these differences in pressure allow me to imagine the condition of creatures whose lack of pressure, momentary in me, is constant. I am never miserable except for the time being. Even at the lowest point, I always feel that I shall soon be able to go back up. At such times I hide myself like a sick dog and want to see no one; I wait until it is over.

Rather fine, even exalting, this remark by Verdi that Barrès quotes (III, p. 183):

"We artists reach celebrity only through calumny."

Interesting pages on Hugo. But aside from this, what a bore are these *Cahiers* of Barrès!

What he likes, what interests him, what he admires . . . nothing is farther from me. And never think save "in terms of. . . ."

He fears corrupting his "taste" by going to the café-concert.

What obstinate pedants will become the young people who let themselves be formed by him!

False taste, false dignity, false poetry, and true love of a false grandeur. . . .

But one cannot fail to be touched by such a constant integrity. In his attachment to Lorraine there is even a sort of "in this way at least I am sure of not making a mistake" which is pathetic.

This third volume contains none of those distressing confessions that handed him over defenseless at one and the same time to both our criticism and our affection. With a constant application he has made himself less and less complex.

When he speaks of a book, I always feel behind him the kind friend handing it to him. When he makes a quotation, I always wonder if he has read what precedes and follows it. I know too well how he got

⁴⁵ *Fantomas* is the general title of a series of some twenty detective novels written by Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre. They enjoyed immense popularity.

others to do his documentation for him. His lack of curiosity when faced with a bookshelf was almost total.⁴⁶ In the writings of others he looked only for something to strengthen his positions; or occasionally, in poetry, some vague exaltation. . . . The interest of natural sciences eluded him, I believe, utterly.

And suddenly, two surprising pages (account of a visit to the hospital of La Pitié) comparable to the best of Hugo's *Choses vues*,⁴⁷ which give a glimpse of what Barrès might have produced if he had let himself go instead of wanting to let himself be swallowed up by "his" dead. It is very beautiful. An anthology of Barrès ought to contain these pages, which throw the best light upon him.

A journalist who knows his profession does not write: "They were ready to come to terms with the Soviets"; but rather, "They were ready to forget all the crimes of the past and the present, to shake the blood-stained hands of the Moscow torturers in a passionate embrace." The whole article of *La Gazette de Lausanne* (of 6 July) is in this tone. (Signed Edm. R.) It is entitled: "America against the Soviets," and bears witness to a noble case of the jitters.

Settled in certainty. Comfortable false ideas.

10 July

"Besides, you know . . . it's the thing to consider this bad," said Pierre Laurens with (I suppose) even more sincerity than humor as he threw Maritain's latest writing on the table of P. A. Laurens, who passed on the remark to me. (For it appears that it is possible to be a Catholic and even an ardent Thomist without Maritain and against Maritain; at least this is what P. A. asserts, and P. A. has the greatest respect for the truth; he is honest through and through. None the less it is with a certain admiration that he repeated to me his brother's remark; and approbation. He himself, if he had said that, could have done so only as a sally of wit and ironically. . . .)

They know, even before opening a book, what it is essential to think of it and whether the flower or the weed is to be noted and picked out to be displayed. How can one struggle against such people? How can one fail to feel beaten in advance when, through fear of bias, it is the enemy's book that is looked upon with the most indulgence, and with the most severe eye what might flatter you . . . ?

But everything is sophistry and bad faith in Massis. And how can one suppose that he was ignorant of the homosexuality of Radiguet

⁴⁶ I remember that, rue Legendre, on a shelf behind the false backs of bound volumes, combs, brushes, and bottles of perfume were hidden. [A.]

⁴⁷ *Things Seen*, a collection of vivid reportorial notes.

and Psichari, whose importance he magnifies to the point of absurdity? And the latter's final turnabout, he whose figure might well have been just as outrageously camouflaged as Jacques Rivière's? But (I have already written this) perhaps, after all, Massis is not even aware of his own deceits and perhaps they are naturally a part of the apparatus of his "belief." To what an extent that easy habit of error warns me against a religion that encourages it! . . .

A little sentence in *Hamlet*, which I do not know to have been much noticed, seems to me so important that I should almost like to see it engraved on the pediment of the drama, of which it seems to me, in a way, the explanation (and what a weapon Barrès might have made of it!). It is spoken by Rosencrantz or Guildenstern (verify this; watch out for inexact quotations!) to Hamlet:

"What were you going to do at Wittenberg?"⁴⁸

Has anyone brought out, as an explanation of Hamlet's character, that he is returning from a German university? He is bringing back to his native land some germs of a foreign philosophy; he has plunged into a metaphysics of which the "to be or not to be" seems to me the indubitable product. I already glimpse all German subjectivism in the famous soliloquy. What was the philosophy that might then have been taught to students? Who were their teachers? And probably his own character predisposed him to it; but it can be admitted that, having remained at home and without this foreign teaching, he would have leaned less in that direction. On his return from Germany he is incapable of action; he ratiocinates. I consider German metaphysics responsible for his irresolution. From his teachers there his mind received liberty to roam at will in abstract speculation, which so speciously substitutes itself for action. And that apparently so simple little question is loaded with meaning and anguish: "Oh, Prince Hamlet, what were you going to do at Wittenberg?"

In the whole drama of Shakespeare (and I ought to say more absolutely: in all drama) there is not a single character more Germanized (I do not say more German) than Hamlet.

⁴⁸ If this little sentence that I thought I was quoting has not been noticed, it is because, to tell the truth, it is not in Shakespeare's text, where I have looked for it in vain. But Hamlet none the less is coming back from Wittenberg, where he wanted to return.

"For your intent

In going back to school in Wittenberg . . ."

the King says to him while dissuading him from this plan. And the Queen:

"I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg."

So that my remark as to the possible German influence on Hamlet's character remains no less valuable. [A.]

12 July

I hold myself in check not to devour Barrès's journal all at once. I find it advantageous to allow myself only a few pages every day. At times there are very beautiful ones, which I read with rapture (Vol. III, pp. 246-7). A bit too much of a "concert piece," aria for the first violin. To this "purple passage"⁴⁹ I prefer even more the paragraph that follows, inspired, it seems, by Mme de N.

But I do not much like in general, and particularly not in Barrès, the use of certain tones and charmed words. "Lake of beauty . . ." "sky of beauty," "melancholy and love," "the most marvelous stars." A really great artist does not change the colors of his palette in order to achieve a poetic effect. This belongs to the confectioner. What he himself calls a little farther on (speaking of Praxiteles' art) "so pomade."

Decidedly it is the Barrès of *Leurs Figures*⁵⁰ that I prefer, incisive and showing his teeth. I do not like him when he perfumes himself, Asiatic and swaying his hips. "Those bursts of empty poetry," he will say. And he adds: "It is essential to cover up that unhealthy poetry which cannot be eradicated. It is perhaps the Truth, but a Truth that condemns our life. One must live while blunting that spur." — You would not be so eager to blunt it if the point were not already so blunt.

This, very rare: he is able to report conversations exactly. Remarkable gifts as a reporter. Admirable when he recounts. (Arthur Meyer's marriage.)

Very interesting article by Thérive against the *Action française* (inspired by Lasserre's posthumous book, which I am eager to read).⁵¹

Always the same complaints. Whenever Barrès takes off from or chooses an example from nature, he is wrong. He does not know how to observe it. I have already noted elsewhere "Nature's" devices and subterfuges for broadcasting the seed always as far as possible from the root-stock, for getting it far away from the plant or tree that bore it. Whatever germinates in its shadow grows sickly.⁵²

13 July

Yet I should like not to bring to this reading of Barrès's *Cahiers* that *indisposition* of the mind that leaves it sensitive only to flaws. In

⁴⁹ The expression in quotation marks appears in English.

⁵⁰ *Their Faces*, first published in 1902, is one of Barrès's "novels of national energy," as he called them.

⁵¹ Pierre Lasserre's *Mise au point (Restatement)*, published in 1931, is a collection of essays explaining his long collaboration with *Action française*, defining his particular liberalism, and reiterating his antiromantic views.

⁵² See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, pp. 372-4.

this eleventh notebook beauties abound. The awareness and acceptance of his limits, of his deficiencies, of his weaknesses (often he exaggerates them to himself) gives these pages an accent that grips one's heart. And how can one fail to admire the expression, almost always perfect, of so constantly active a will to get the best out of himself? What sincerity in these confessions! "I see how fanciful my dreams are. At the age of twenty I did not know this. . . . My relations with society are much less numerous than I imagined when I used to dream of power, fame, women. . . ." His ambition . . . it is only when he abandons it that my affection is born.

"What then do I like in the past? Its melancholy, its silence, and, above all, its fixity. Whatever keeps moving bothers me." Can one imagine a more serious confession? And as if the whole future were not to become, in turn, more past! The idea of a possible progress of humanity does not even occur to his mind. In contact with these pages I become more aware of the extent to which that idea of progress has gripped me, possesses me.

How manifest is the influence (pernicious) of both Taine and Renan!

15 July

The last few days are spent in going over the translation that Stoisy Sternheim has made of my *Saül*, for an eventual performance. Groethuysen, indefatigably devoted and unfailingly kind, is a great help to us. Stoisy keeps us to lunch every day.

As I reread my play, it seems to me one of the best things I have written, and perhaps the most surprising. It will be discovered later on and people will probably be amazed that it went so long unnoticed.

I let myself be taken by Stoisy Sternheim to a presentation of *La Belle Hélène*, put on by Reinhardt.⁵³ Huge success; the theater is full despite the price of tickets (fourteen marks). Same discomfort as at the revival of *La Vie parisienne* recently in Paris. The play, pompously staged, seems painfully insignificant; a mere pretext for the exhibition of costumes and ample expanses of flesh. (A Venus, audaciously unclothed, extremely beautiful; but one regrets not seeing *her* at greater length.) It would all be more at home in the Casino. Offenbach's music suffers too from this amplification; his charming frivolity seems hollow. The public is delighted.

⁵³ Offenbach's operetta, *The Beautiful Helen*, with book by Meilhac and Halévy, was first produced in 1864. *Parisian Life* was first given two years later.

17 July

There are certain days when, if I merely let myself go, I should roll directly under the Lord's Table. They think it is pride that withholds me. Not at all! It is intellectual integrity.

Paris, 19 July

Odd that such a row is kicked up about the printing errors in Proust's books, though he wrote rapidly — whereas in a text of mine, where every word is weighed, so little attention is paid to quoting me exactly. And since most often people quote only at second or third hand, it is that distorted quotation which, subsequently, is requoted by others. . . . I doubt if ever texts have been more often deformed and could suffer more from deformation than mine. This adds some bitterness to the pleasure brought me by Fernandez's book. He quotes according to Du Bos: "His thought carefully unwinds." I wrote: "his thought unwinds like silk"⁵⁴ (*Faux-Monnayeurs*, p. 390). Did Charles Du Bos already make the error?

Cuverville, 24 July

Read *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Thornton Wilder. It is literature, but of the best; and even with something more. Delightfully written, facing the past.

The Spanish revolution, the struggle of the Vatican against Fascism, the German financial crisis, and, above all, Russia's extraordinary effort . . . all this distracts me frightfully from literature. I have just devoured in two days Knickerbocker's book on the Five-Year Plan, which Marc Chadourne lent me.⁵⁵

A half-hour to crawl down to the bottom of those coal-mines without elevators; a half-hour to come up again. Five hours of work crouching in a stifling atmosphere. The peasant recruits desert; but the young formed by the new ethic enroll enthusiastically, eager to work for the progress of which they have been given a glimpse. It is a duty to be done, to which they submit joyfully. Ah, how well I understand their *happiness!*

27 July

In Paris again, but for only two days. Tomorrow, board meeting of the N.R.F. in the morning, and in the afternoon reading of Roger Martin du Gard.

I should like to cry aloud my affection for Russia; and that my cry

⁵⁴ A misreading of *soigneusement* for *soyeusement*.

⁵⁵ H. R. Knickerbocker's *The Red Trade Menace: Progress of the Soviet Five-Year Plan*, was published in 1931.

should be heard, should have importance. I should like to live long enough to see the success of that tremendous effort; its realization, which I wish with all my soul and for which I should like to work. To see what can be produced by a state without religion,⁵⁶ a society without the family. Religion and the family are the two worst enemies of progress.

Cuverville, 28 July

The music of the sentence . . . today I attach less value to this than to its clarity, its exactitude, and that force of persuasion related to its profound animation.

These letters of Proust to Mme de Noailles discredit Proust's judgment (or sincerity) much more than they serve her fame as a poetess. Flattery cannot go further. But Proust knew Mme de N. well enough, knew her to be vain and sufficiently incapable of self-criticism to hope that the most exaggerated praise would seem to her the most deserved, the most sincere; he played with her as he played with everyone. And I see in these shameless flatteries less hypocrisy than an obsessive need of serving up to each individual what he would most like, without any care for truth, but simply for opportunism; and especially a desire to bring out and soften up the one on whom he blows hottest.

29 July

Julien calls upon his will in order to dare try out on Mme de Rênal the first gesture of seduction.⁵⁷ Later on this gesture, which he has repeated with ever greater ease in dealing with other women, will have become so natural to him that, in order *not* to make it, he will require a greater effort of the will than he originally needed to risk it for the first time.

Cuverville, 1 August

I read this sentence from Darwin, quoted by Brunschvicg (*De la connaissance de soi*, p. 22):⁵⁸

"Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aborigi-

⁵⁶ Without religion? Perhaps not. But a religion without mythology. [A.]

⁵⁷ Julien Sorel, the hero of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir* (*The Red and the Black*).

⁵⁸ *On Self-Knowledge* (1931) was a course of lectures on man in his biological, sociological, and psychological aspects given at the Sorbonne the preceding year. The quotation, which Brunschvicg and Gide both give in French translation, is from the last page of *The Descent of Man*.

nally placed there, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future."

There is not so much occasion for pride in having what one has not achieved oneself but has been achieved by others as of hope, indeed, of rising still higher, or achieving, from man and for man, still more, ever more, and an ardent will to help in this. The contemplation of one's own insufficiency and devotion to a divine creator teach less than they anesthetize the will and dissuade it from effort.

I scrupulously ruled out of my *Faux-Monnayeurs* everything that another might just as well have written, being satisfied with indications allowing one to imagine whatever I did not set out. I recognize that those neutral passages are the very ones that rest, reassure, and win over the reader; I alienated many of those whose laziness I should have flattered. But if I am told that I was incapable of doing what I did not want to do, I protest. What is easier than to write a novel like others! I am loath to do so, that's all, and no more than Valéry can I resign myself to writing: "The Marquise went out at five o'clock," or, and this is of a quite different nature, but strikes me as even more compromising: "X. wondered at length whether . . ."

Here is the *N.R.F.* I let Paulhan announce *Jeunesse*;⁵⁹ but, through zeal, he uses such large capitals that people will expect something or other and everyone will be disappointed.

My method would be to promise less and to give more; but, as of the present moment, I have never seen the public be grateful for discretion, reserve, modesty. It notices only what one forces it to see.

2 August

Struggle against what? . . . As soon as one considers man and not God as responsible, one can no longer resign oneself to anything.

Smiling resignation is not at all my dish. If I do not assert more, it is because I believe insinuation to be more effective. One resists what shocks one, protesting in return. It is a question of persuading, and I believe one succeeds much better by inviting the other to reflect than by offending him.

I make up my mind to write to Copeau. I made a copy of my letter.

3 August

The great danger is letting oneself be monopolized by a fixed idea. Goethe managed to avoid it. Neither Tolstoy nor Barrès did. At a cer-

⁵⁹ The brief account of his youth at La Roque, with the story of Mulot and Robidet.

tain age the field of vision frequently narrows. "Convictions" are bad; I hope to purge myself of them in *Geneviève*.

I no longer hoped being able to work as well as I have the last few days. I shall be able to judge the quality of what I am writing only with a little perspective. Meanwhile I go ahead without rereading myself too much.

Very good piano-practice.

5 August

A man "in whom is no guile." I know no other which, more than this word of the Gospel, has dominated my life. It seems to me pretentious to say so. But, young as I then was, yes, that is what I inscribed in my mind. It seems to me today that "sincerity" and the effort to achieve it *in oneself* are contained therein.

I have often noticed the care the cat takes not to wound the field-mouse with which he is playing (contrary to the current opinion). He is less delicate with the mouse that, more agile, might escape him. Still less delicate with the bird, when the latter is already capable of flying away. But yesterday I surprised my cat in the garden playing with a little wren, still unable to fly. With what precautions his velvet paw pushed it, made it hop! I was observing him from behind a window and could intervene only rather late. The little bird did not have the least scratch and did not seem otherwise upset. I put it back into the bush from which it must have fallen, where I saw it hop from branch to branch and where its parents, soon after, were able to come and feed it.

On carelessly made or insufficient observations how many fine theories are built up which do not bear examination!

7 August

Each of these last few days I have worked on *Geneviève*. I write without too much difficulty; but it is hard to convince myself that what I write without more effort or enthusiasm can be worth anything.

13 August

I restrain myself from sending to Charlie Du Bos this quotation from the *Osservatore romano*⁶⁰ which fills me with laughter:

"The recent commemoration of Shelley at the spa of San Giuliano, where he composed *Adonais*, has provoked a protest from the *Osservatore romano*. The Vatican organ speaks up vehemently against the glorification of the English poet's memory:

⁶⁰ The official Papal newspaper of Italy, now issued from the Vatican State.

"It would have been better," we read, "that such a man had never been borne, for he resembles too closely the one against whom these terrible words fell from the divine lips. Poetry would have lost but little, and great scandals would have been avoided.

"The life of Shelley, rebellious toward his parents, rebellious toward his teachers, rebellious toward his wife, who spent his whole fortune in building up a revolutionary library, who was expelled from the university for having published an incendiary pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, is an object of abomination. We are amazed that this anarchist, enthusiastic for anarchy, has found some to praise him in the Fascist press which never ceases to extoll respect, authority, and the necessity for a solid discipline, and declares that nothing must lie outside the collectivity and that all must be subordinated to it: thought, action, teaching, and art. Again it is seen where are the foundations of authority, order, and discipline — foundations that do not crumble before a little poet who had a gift for turning out erotic lines."

And the *Osservatore* concludes:

"So long as such praises are possible in the Fascist press, the role of Catholic Action, of its clubs and schools, will remain great."

22 August

At Saint-Clair for several days now. Yesterday evening reading aloud of the beginning of *Geneviève* before Groet,⁶¹ Alix Guillaïn, Elisabeth, and Pierre Herbart. Would need a tremendous job of perfecting. Lamentable insufficiency of precision, of particularity, in the sketching of the characters.

Marseille, 1 September

The surrealists are preparing a sensational antireligious issue,⁶² H. tells me. He tells me enthusiastically of B.'s courage. When he sees a priest in the métro he takes care to stand close to him, then, after a few moments, to say in a very loud voice:

"How long are you going to keep on pawing me like that? You dirty dog! Old lecher! . . . And to think that children are entrusted to such as you! . . ."

H. declares this "admirable." I cannot see courage in the crushing of a creature who cannot defend himself, and applaud Robert Levesque's remark:

"However antimilitarist he may be, B. would never dare act the same way with an officer, knowing only too well that he would get a slap."

⁶¹ Bernard Groethuysen.

⁶² Of their periodical, *Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (*Surrealism in the Service of Revolution*).

It is the very perfidy, the cowardice of that act, that H. admires:

"There is no question of reasoning, but rather of putting them in such a situation that they can't say a word."

As for me, I always fear (somewhat mystically still, I confess) strengthening the adversary's position by putting injustice on my side. And besides, in any case — and even if it were to bring me victory — iniquity is intolerable to me; I still prefer to be its victim; but it makes me angry even when exercised against me, and not at all because of the wrong it does me. . . . No, but because of a certain warped equilibrium. But H. is an impassioned man; it is his very passion that I like in him, that constitutes his value and strength. The sense of justice (I see it, to be sure, from my example) would get in his way.

With what ease I detach myself from what has ceased to educate me!

Marseille, 2 September

I am therefore going to leave the summer in an hour. Why go away so soon? To get back to Cuverville, where I am not expected until the 15th. Never a more radiant morning; not a breath of wind; columns of smoke rise and spread out above the town; the sea is smooth, inviting to travel. I was to sail for Corsica; the last few days sated me so with pleasure that I thought I could want nothing but work. After five delightful nights, one night of rest and I look nostalgically upon what I am leaving here. I forsook this notebook at the moment when I should have had the most to say. I cannot recall a more total surrender to joy. This is partly because my joy was made of the joy I brought to B. and to X. The latter, whom I left yesterday, is going then to sail in my place. I prepared everything for him. It is his turn. The greatest wisdom is to withdraw gracefully.

X. invites Véra to meet him in Calvi. He is taking little Jean, who accompanied B. to Saint-Clair. I could not have wished for him a more lyric aspect of pleasure. My imagination has a good time following them. . . . How beautiful the weather is!

Was it not also the need of proving to myself this: even more than pleasure, it is the calm subsequent to it that I seek; the clear, disinterested gaze which that satisfaction of the flesh allows one to turn toward the world, and that tranquilizing of the whole being.

Am I still at the point of seeking in such sophistries the justification of an absurd act? Was I not, rather, afraid of joy, of too much joy? As for this precipitated return northward, it seems to me, now that the train is carrying me off, that I have never in my whole life done anything more stupid.

September

To what a degree the same past can leave different marks — and especially admit of different interpretations.

Try all one's life never to do an insincere thing, not to write a single sentence that goes beyond one's thought in any way, and one can then hope to be called, at about sixty, a "play-actor" by an M.A.⁶³ This is a term he in no wise thinks of applying to all our masters in camouflage; he reserves it for me alone, accompanied by the epithet "magnificent," which excuses him for having none the less admired me, but explains why — after having seen through me — he now turns away. Most likely he took offence at the few words in my *Cedipe* where I make my Eteocles the author, like him, of a *Nouveau Mal du siècle*.⁶⁴ What pride! What pettiness! If he had plagiarized me less in the past, he would disavow me less vigorously today. I do not like that way, after having taken your fountain-pen, of moving away from you in order to avoid suspicion.

12 September

At the Gare de Lyon. I am leaving Paris reluctantly. If the season were less advanced, I should return at once to Cuverville. But I fear not to have had enough sunlight. . . . Oh no, I am not yielding to any solicitation, and perhaps never have I set out with so little joy. It is raining. I have a headache. My heart is beating weakly. I feel old. Although I know I can easily allow myself this expense, I grant it to myself begrudgingly. . . .

This tiresome mood might change on the way. I begin this notebook in order to help it do so. . . .

At Cuverville I managed to complete (or almost) the article on Goethe I had promised to the *Neue* or *Deutsche Rundschau*. I should have liked Marcel's criticisms; but, according to his habit, he put off the reading until too late. His example, and that ruinous confidence he has in time, pushes me in the opposite direction. At one time I used to get there a quarter of an hour before the train left; now, more than an hour ahead of time. Which allows me to dine at the station buffet, where I am writing this.

I am taking with me few books: *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and Goethe's poems (2 vols.), plus a book by Engels, sent by Strohl: *Herr*

⁶³ Marcel Arland.

⁶⁴ *The New World-Weariness* was the title of an essay by Marcel Arland in 1924. Seven years later, as a way of mocking his overenthusiastic disciples, Gide attributed this title — together with that of *Our Unrest*, borrowed from Daniel-Rops — to the callow Eteocles of his drama.

Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science. And the last installment of Lacretelle's novel.⁶⁵

Sunday, 13

Reached Marseille at seven o'clock. Sailed at noon for Bastia. The odd and dull appearance of my traveling-companions makes me think I got on the wrong ship.

Splendid weather, but I learn that a dreadful mistral blew last night, that the sea was rough, that the ships entering Marseille were frightfully late. . . .

Most interesting conversation with a captain of the Foreign Legion. Very happy to learn his rank in the course of one of his tales: "At that time I was not yet a captain." (I have never been able to tell rank; and in a conversation with an officer am embarrassed to be reduced to calling him "sir.")

He relates, and very well too, the transfer to Sidi-bel-Abbès of a flag of the Legion bearing on one side of the rosette the initials L.É. (*Légion Étrangère*) and on the other L.N. (*Louis-Napoléon*), which had gone through both the Crimean and the Mexican Wars and been preserved until then at the *Musée des Invalides*.

Excellent crossing. But I am unable to surrender to joy without repeating to myself: Still you! . . . Aren't you ashamed? Make way for others. It is time. . . .

Calvi, Monday

Arrived at Ajaccio at about ten o'clock. Wild desire to go back at once. Absurd longing, to want to begin the past over again! The town seemed to be charming. Last summer, I don't know why, I had been unable to see it. At the period of the *Nourritures* I should have wept with joy over it. The first rays of the sun were turning the houses pink along the harbor. Large sea-birds were circling above the ship. I needed a younger companion who would have been stirred, he at least, by the discovery of what so much stirred me once. I merely noted and with almost no rise in temperature that it was quite worthy of stirring someone. Doubtless my exaltation was still greater than that of the other passengers, but could that be enough for me? I expect certain things of myself. . . . Yet I managed to keep myself almost joyful during the motor trip. But at Calvi I do not find Paul V., or Véra, or

⁶⁵ *Herrn Eugen Dühring's Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (1878), by Friedrich Engels, was translated into French in 1932 by Bracke. Lacretelle's novel is probably *Sabine*, which came out in 1932 as the first volume of the cyclic novel *Les Hauts-Ponts* (*High Bridges*).

little Jean. They must have left already. . . . I dragged my boredom out onto the quays of the harbor, barely able to smile at the numerous children who recognized me. The wind is rising. The return crossing will be bad. What have I come to look for here? I hardly slept at all last night. I am sleepy.

Tuesday, 15 September

Drank deep of sleep till I had no further thirst.

I think of that little soldier whom Domi saw die beside him in the ditch where they had both huddled. Less well sheltered than Domi, he got all the bullets. Domi heard them penetrate that tender flesh. And the little fellow (almost a child, Domi said) did not moan, but simply said, at moments, when he got a new wound: "It's too much! Oh! it's too much! . . ." in a soft voice, as if he were quite ready to suffer, but not that much.

I reserve the only cabin still available on tomorrow's boat.

It is the fuel oil that is poisoning the sea water. Whence the impoverishment, the progressive disappearance of the wonderful marine flora-fauna. The most imponderable trace of a chemically foreign element is enough to wither them. Those colonies of madrepores are like populations wiped out by the asphyxiating gases of future wars. I blamed the factories along the coast; but it is the ships themselves that today go spreading devastation in their path, beneath them and far around them.

During lunch at the hotel. I look around me to see if I am the only one to notice that the meat being served us is slightly spoiled. But they all look as if they were enjoying themselves as at a play by Henry Bataille.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ I read in the *Revue des deux mondes* of the 1st of August an article by Raymond Escholier inspired by the Conservatory competition, in which:

"Her [Mlle Cunat's] luck consisted in appearing in the admirable *Parissienne* immediately after a fragment, a rag of Henry Bataille, now aged, wrinkled, shabby. . . . One can no longer endure that overelaborate, deliquescent language."

Hooray! But there are some of us who do not have to take back anything, who have never been able to endure what the critics, almost unanimously, went into ecstasies over for so long. I do not believe even that they ever debased their praise to such an extent. Moreover, it is in relation to dramatic art that in all times criticism has committed the worst errors. And this is also why the decay of our drama . . .

Aragon is too intelligent and has too delicate taste to have been taken in.

Well before the crossing one's stomach begins to get queasy. An indescribable discomfort kept me in bed all day long, with shivers, sweating, and dizziness. Due in part to inanition. . . . *Ach! wär' ich zu Hause!*⁶⁷ — A coward's cry.

I find here again a charming Tzara; his wife exquisite. And I am vexed with myself for not finding anything to say to them. But then why did I accompany them for such a distance along the road, just as if I were not aware that I was in their way . . . ? Oh, how little I control myself!

The peach was too ripe, utterly spoiled. I complain and another is brought me; this one as hard as a stone.

"Weil meine Empfindung wie mein Urteil nicht leicht etwas völlig ausschloss." (Goethe: *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, p. 385.)⁶⁸

This edition in two volumes (Insel Verlag) of Goethe's poems should not be recommended to a novice. He would get lost in it. The poems are all arranged in chronological order and this is very instructive; but those poems are of very unequal quality, and the best is often submerged.

The poems of the *Divan* are scattered.

I reread the *Sommernacht*, more than one stanza of which I know by heart and recited to C. two years ago.

I told him of my embarrassment in relation to the last stanza, the one addressed to the cup-bearer, to discover on reading a translation (by Porchat) that one should understand "your beautiful one" where, through an unconsciously selfish point of view, I had always understood "your own beauty."

Here are the lines:

*Geb nur, lieblichster der Söhne,
Tief ins Innre, schliesz die Türen,
Denn sie [die Sonne] möchte deine Schöne
Als den Hesperus entführen.*

"I very much fear," C. said smiling, "that it is not you, but Porchat, who made the misinterpretation. *Schöne* is used here for *Schönheit*."

Thus, through convention and respect for morals, through a desire not to scandalize the reader, and perhaps blind himself, Porchat ac-

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When he extolled Bataille's work, he was well aware of what he was doing and that, in all recent literature, nothing worse can be found. [A.]

*La Parisienne* is a comedy by Henry Becque. The same word that is used for meat that is "high" or slightly spoiled, *faisandé*, was commonly and admiringly applied to the drama of Bataille.

<sup>67</sup> "Oh, if I were only home!"

<sup>68</sup> "Because my way of feeling, like my judgment, was not prone to exclude anything completely." (Goethe: *Truth and Poetry*.)

cepts this absurdity: a child running to lock up his mistress for fear that Aurora may take her away from him, mistaking her for Hesperus!

*It is true that in these scented gardens  
The nightingale cries out all night long;  
But you might wait in vain  
A complete eclipse of daylight.*

*For in this season of Flora,  
According to the fabled Greeks,  
That false widow, Aurora,  
Burns with love for Hesperus.*

*How quickly she comes. Look —  
Over the colored flower-beds  
Before so much light, already  
Night begins to yield.*

*Go now, my beloved child,  
And hide in your most secret chamber  
Lest Aurora, seeing your beauty,  
Take you for Hesperus and carry you off.<sup>69</sup>*

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<sup>69</sup> *Il est vrai que dans ces jardins embaumés  
Le rossignol clame le long des nuits;  
Mais en vain tu pourrais attendre  
Un complet effacement du jour.*

*Car dans cette saison de Flore,  
Si l'on en croit le peuple grec,  
Cette fausse veuve, l'Aurore,  
Brûle d'amour pour Hesperus.*

*Combien vite elle accourt! Regarde,  
Sur les parterres de fleurs  
Devant tant de clarté déjà  
La nuit cède.*

*Va maintenant, mon enfant bien aimé,  
T'enfermer dans la chambre la plus secrète,  
De crainte que l'Aurore, si elle apercevait ta beauté,  
Te prenant pour Hesperus ne t'enlève.*

My translation is a bit free, for fear of the platitudes resulting from too precise a juxtaposition of words; but what can be said of Porchat's:

"Go then, my lovely child, deep into your house; close the doors, for the goddess might well carry off your beautiful one, having taken her for Hesperus."<sup>70</sup>

Fine example of camouflage (perhaps unconscious).

*Wednesday*

The wind, furious yesterday, calmed down during the night. It seems that Zeus and Neptune and Boreas wanted to show what they could be, but what they will not be for me.

I should like to write a *Dédale et Icare*; perhaps it will be a chapter of *Thésée*.<sup>71</sup>

My itch is becoming unbearable again. Most likely result of three baths! — oh! merely in a bathtub, in the Fleurissoire manner.<sup>72</sup>

This was a long time ago . . . one day when I was worried to find Valéry so care-worn, so tired:

"I remember," he told me, "an absurd fairy-tale I had seen in my earliest childhood. There was a poor chap who, after a day of tribulations, hoped to get a bit of rest in an inn bedroom. But every time he went to bed and prepared to sleep, the furniture in the room began to dance, the legs of the bed rose up, the bedding slipped off, and frightful little demons came down the chimney or sprang from the open window. The poor patient would say then, in a very resigned tone of voice (just as I am now doing): 'Well now! here is that nonsense beginning again.'"

*17 September*

On the point of leaving Corsica, unexpected meeting with X. If I was unable to see him in Calvi, it is because he was staying in his room, very ill from a sunstroke he had got at Porto. We decide at once to leave together. The "de luxe" cabin I had to take, since there were no others left, has a divan that will be made up. Deck overcrowded;<sup>73</sup> it is hard to make one's way among the rows of deck-chairs. Mattresses

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<sup>70</sup> "Va donc, mon aimable enfant, au fond de ta demeure; ferme les portes, car la déesse pourratt bien ravir ta belle, l'ayant prise pour Hesperus."

<sup>71</sup> A scene with Dædalus and Icarus does indeed form one of the central chapters of *Theseus*, which was not finished until 1944 and was published in 1946. See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 302.

<sup>72</sup> Amédée Fleurissoire is the mousey man from Pau who goes to Rome in *Les Caves du Vatican* (*Lafcadio's Adventures*).

<sup>73</sup> This last word appears in English.

are laid out in the saloons, in the dining-room, in the halls. I think of what a shipwreck, or even a heavy sea, would be like. . . . But the wind has died down and nothing could be more even than our ship's advance in the night (left at 10 p.m.), or more glorious than, this morning, our entrance into the harbor of Toulon all bathed in azure.

I should go to sleep at once were it not for these passengers talking in a loud voice outside our porthole. And this until after midnight. And it begins again between one and two. My indignation especially, when faced with such a lack of regard for others, keeps me from sleeping, and the itching that starts up again as ferocious as ever: like wearing puttees of nettles.

18 September

In a reply by Massis to a question asked by *Candide* I read with amusement:

"Never, at the height of their fervor, did the wildest Gidians among us speak of Gide with the enthusiasm and ecstasy of these newcomers."

Decidedly you did not bury me very deep, my dear Massis! And all those "Let's get out of here; he's beginning to smell" of your declarations of my "bankruptcy" did not, after all, do me all the harm you had hoped.

But you prefer to admit that you were wrong in your prognostics about the postwar generation and to bury it altogether in the same grave with me, rather than admit that I was perhaps not so dead as you used to say.

19 September

That amazing difficulty, that near impossibility for the vast majority of French people to imagine that others can dress, eat, think, live, in short, otherwise than in France. It is still the "How can one be a Persian?"<sup>74</sup>

(Siegfried speaks excellently of this and Curtius too, who quotes him in a remarkable article in the *Neue Rundschau* that he sends me: "*Abbau der Bildung*."<sup>75</sup>)

Native disposition, but encouraged by family upbringing and the teaching of the schools. Those who are already French are taught to be French. Far from being released, they are further imprisoned.

20 September

At Cuverville again after a week's absence. I return sobered and cheered. Anxious above all for work.

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<sup>74</sup> The summary of the French attitude to the Persian visitor in *Les Lettres persanes* (*The Persian Letters*) by Montesquieu.

<sup>75</sup> "The Abolition of Culture."

Two interesting brochures are sent me from America: *André Gide and His Catholic Critics*, and *Marcel Schwob and André Gide ('A Literary Affinity')*.<sup>76</sup>

Strange that the first comparison — which was really inevitable — between Schwob's *Le Livre de Monelle*<sup>77</sup> and my *Nourritures terrestres* should come from so far away. It is true that the publication of *Monelle* attracted hardly any more attention from critics and the public than did the *Nourritures* three years later. At that time publishers scarcely used publicity; and, moreover, the authors' pride would not have consented to this.

On different planes, the exhortation of the two books was the same, but it remained altogether intellectual with Schwob. This is also why his little book was better received than mine in the beginning.

I do not think there was the slightest influence from one to the other. It is simply that both of them testify to a similar need. Of all my books there is none more spontaneous, more sincere than my *Nourritures*. Besides, it is in great part made up of extracts from journals and notebooks prior to *Monelle*.

Schwob bore me a grudge for this, I was told. My brutal book indecently crushed his delicate book. . . . He held it against me for some time and I was deeply grieved, for his friendship was dear to me. Yet I yielded to too imperative a necessity for any considerations, even those of friendship, to withhold me from writing and publishing. I shall add that, however flagrant the resemblances were, that book was too intimately mine for them to be apparent to me at once, at least with enough force. In *Monelle* I was above all sensitive to all that separated it from life and found it, though exquisite, somewhat quaint. And the greater reality and more immediate contact with nature that my *Nourritures* offered were likewise what was to frighten the earliest readers off, what was to remain so long without assent, without echo. It was to those very elements by which my book differed most from Schwob's that, later on, it owed its importance.

26 September

In *Les Mémoires d'outre-tombe*,<sup>78</sup> I am reading the story of Napoleon with the greatest admiration.<sup>79</sup> Nothing left here, almost nothing,

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<sup>76</sup> These are both articles by S. A. Rhodes; the first appeared in *Sewanee Review* in October 1930 and the second in the *Romanic Review* in February 1931.

<sup>77</sup> *The Book of Monelle* is a work of lyric exultation in the beauties of nature and the joys of the senses, an appeal for self-fulfillment.

<sup>78</sup> Chateaubriand's *Memoirs from beyond the Grave*.

<sup>79</sup> That admiration soon yielded in the following chapter (the Russian campaign) to an even greater animadversion, strengthening even more my

of that conceit which, in so many other places, makes this book insufferable to me.

I copy out:

"It is obvious that those who speak of Walter Scott's work [*Life of Napoleon*] as of a book written under the influence of English national prejudices and with a private interest have never read it: no one reads any more in France."

29 September

In *Le Temps* an article by Henriot on a new edition of Delacroix's journal. Henriot quotes with admiration this advice that Delacroix used to give himself: "Nourish yourself on great and severe beauties that nourish the soul," and praises him for admiring only "inspired geniuses who draw from things exclusively what it is essential to show to the mind." What can one find to admire in these empty formulas? The "noble" unsuitability of the terms or the dodging of the issue? . . . At the time when I still admired Delacroix, the reading of his journal was a great disappointment. No more in his style than in his art does he succeed in getting really close to himself, as does Baudelaire, Stendhal, or Chopin, whom he yet was able to admire.

Paris, 4 October

Dined with Copeau at the restaurant of the Vieux-Colombier. Maurras comes in shortly after us. Had not seen him for . . . probably thirty years. Copeau points him out to me. I should not have recognized him. Does he recognize me? I don't know. Besides, a pillar hides us from each other. . . . As we leave, Copeau tells me of his latest conversation with Maurras, several years ago. He imitates Maurras wonderfully:

"Léon Daudet is amazing: he likes Claudel!"

Whereupon Copeau, laughing:

"So do I."

"I prefer Racine."

"So do I."

Copeau has never seemed to me more lively, younger even; nor more affectionate. But the conversation wanders. Immediately after dinner he accompanies me to Roger's, where I had an appointment.

Long conversation about his play (*Un Taciturne*<sup>80</sup>) which has been under rehearsal at Jouvet's for a week. Roger complains of not

opinion that there is no worse school of style than that grandiloquence; and even much more pernicious influence than that of Rousseau, Barrès, or Loti. How many have allowed themselves to be poisoned by it! [A.]

<sup>80</sup> *A Man of Few Words* by Roger Martin du Gard concerns a case of unconscious homosexuality and its belated, shocked recognition.



being able to find a young actor who is sufficiently attractive physically. X., who offers himself for the role, is intelligent and charming; but, says Roger: "No one in the audience will ever have a desire to kiss him on the mouth." The secret motive of the play, moreover, seems completely incomprehensible to Jouvett and to Renoir. Not the slightest tremor, not the slightest warmth. If sensuality does not enter in, the pistol-shot at the end has no justification. . . .

Roger is beginning to grasp that he was perhaps not right to assert that there is not a man, however little he may lean toward Sodom, who can remain insensitive to the appeal of a Ganymede. He must become convinced, however, that in this regard some remain utterly blind, totally indifferent to the *ignudi* of the Sistine Chapel and unable to see anything but aberration in the passage from Diderot's letter that the *N.R.F.* printed last year (quote it).<sup>81</sup> But even if the majority of the audience are capable of a certain partial comprehension, this would have to be prepared by a certain youthful warmth, a sensual charm, a possible appeal on the part of the young actor.<sup>82</sup> Jouvett wants there to be "no possible ambiguity"; he will avoid it so effectively that the secret desire of the "man of few words" will seem preposterous and his final deed an act of pure madness. All this might upset the play. And it will teach Roger that to succeed in the theater one must above all not try to get outside the conventions.

Cuverville, 7 October

"Every license, except against love." <sup>83</sup>

"One must not sadden anyone" ("a single soul," Barrès said poetically). Can anything more debilitating be imagined than raising such flabby formulas to the status of maxims? What I can admire in "love" is abnegation, sacrifice; but this very sacrifice becomes pitiable if the person who provokes it is unworthy, or even if, simply, he is not worth

<sup>81</sup> The passage, which Gide does not quote, is: "One would perhaps accuse oneself more easily of planning a major crime than of some slight obscure feeling that was vile and base. It would be perhaps less painful to write in one's account-book: *I have desired the throne at the expense of its present occupant's life, than to write: one day while I was at the bath with a large number of young men, I noticed one of surprising beauty and was not able to keep myself from approaching him.* This sort of examination would not be useless for oneself either." These lines occur in a letter to Sophie Volland dated 14 July 1762, which was published by André Babelon in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* for March 1929.

<sup>82</sup> I should speak in exactly the same way if it were a question of Hippolyte. The actor to whom this role is given must not be such as to make Phèdre inexcusable. [A.] The reference is, of course, to Racine's *Phèdre*.

<sup>83</sup> "*Toute licence, sauf contre l'amour*" is the title of an essay by Maurice Barrès that appeared in 1892.

the one who is sacrificed, as it most always happens; for in abnegation a person is purified and magnified. The glorification of "love" will prove to have been one of the worst and most ridiculous errors of this time. What I am saying may seem blasphemy only by virtue of the frightful confusion this word *love* creates. It signifies just as well the noblest and most disinterested ardor as it does the vilest; under cover of this confusion what illegitimate privileges the latter enjoys! Almost everything that is said about "love" is tainted with self-indulgence.

I do not know who signs the name "Gringoire" in the paper of the same name. He gives us admirable examples of bad writing. His article begins thus: "When it is, if it is ever successfully achieved, cured . . ." and immediately afterward: "It would be premature to expect that Europe is, from one day to another, to recover . . ." etc. Whoever is not stopped by such sentences at the very beginning of the article is worthy of being convinced by Gringoire's "thinking."

10 October

The rainy summer is followed by a splendid autumn. Two days in succession I have gone by bicycle to join a group of gypsies who have set up their camp at Les Loges. Some among them are tending the horses grazing in an open space near the village. I tarry for some time, seated beside them; members of the same family who had not seen one another in three years and who met at Bourg-Achard. They belong to a circus that is going to put on a show Sunday and Monday, the market-day.

Return in the evening coolness, which would once have filled me with a tremendous joy. But today, without a companion, my emotion stays close to the ground and has forgotten how to take to the air. I tell myself that I ought to feel moved and this keeps me from being so. My liveliest joys are no longer brought me by my blunted senses. This is fitting. My eyes have weakened considerably the last few days.

19 October

On reading Crémieux's book: <sup>84</sup>

Tendency to put more credit into . . . what cost more dearly. The amount the war cost in human lives, in sufferings, etc. . . . leads us to exaggerate its importance. The Russian experience of the Five-Year Plan *interests me* more. Moreover it too cost dearly.

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<sup>84</sup> *Inquiétude et reconstruction (Unrest and Reconstruction)*, a study of contemporary literature, which sees the early twenties dominated by the spiritual upset caused by the war and followed by a period of new positive values.

*Marius* on the screen.<sup>85</sup> Wonderful acting. Raimu masterful. Excellent dialogue, uselessly (hence tiresomely) broken by views sure to put the audience's imagination to sleep. An art in which nothing is left to suggestion. Give me rather the theater. . . .

But I strive to notice especially the advantages, whatever the change may be. This is one of the first principles of my self-education.

Massis, after having proclaimed my "bankruptcy," now holds me responsible for the bankruptcy of the generation following me. He sees salvation only in clinging to old principles. I hold, on the contrary, that everything must be questioned anew and that nothing solid can be built on these rotten props. He takes me for a destructive spirit, or above all tries to pass me off as such. But what I am destroying is already falling in ruins. It is the tremendous hope filling me that keeps me from clinging to the past. What *was* interests me and what *is*; but even more what *may be* and what I should *like there to be*.

*Cuverville, late October*

Salvemini asks me to intervene in regard to Lauro de Bosis.<sup>86</sup> He sends me all the documents he has managed to gather together relating that hero's wonderful exploit. I already knew most of them; they had been given me by an intimate friend of Lauro de Bosis, particularly his letter to the King of Italy, the one to the Italian people, and the last will of the new Icarus. I cannot read these papers without the greatest emotion; but what can I do? . . .

I must explain myself to Salvemini: despite my admiration for the young hero's deed, I lack something: belief in liberty. It is most difficult for me to bring my own thought to light. The notion of liberty, as it is taught us, seems to me singularly false and pernicious. And if I approve the Soviet constraint, I must likewise approve the Fascist discipline. I am more and more inclined to believe that the idea of liberty is but a snare. I should like to be sure that I should think the same if I myself were not free, I who cherish above all my own freedom of thought; but I also believe, and more and more so, that man achieves nothing worth while without constraint and that very rare are those capable of finding that constraint in themselves. I also believe that the

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<sup>85</sup> After a phenomenal success on the stage in 1929, Marcel Pagnol's play of Marseille life, *Marius*, was made into a film by him, with Raimu in the title role.

<sup>86</sup> The gifted young Italian poet and essayist, Lauro de Bosis (1901-31), became an active anti-Fascist and, learning to fly for this purpose, flew over Rome on 2 October 1931, scattering leaflets addressed to the population and to the King. Chased by pursuit planes, he vanished at sea on the return flight.

authentic color of an individual thought takes on its full value only when it stands out against a background that is not itself multicolored. It is the uniformity of the masses that allows a few rare individuals to rise, in contrast to it. The "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" of the Gospel seems to me more than ever a teaching full of wisdom. On God's side, freedom, that of the mind; on Cæsar's side, submission, that of acts. The single concern with the happiness of the greatest number, on the one hand; on the other, the single concern with truth.

But what I am writing of this here barely satisfies me. This remains: constraint for constraint, Fascism's strikes me as a return to the past, whereas that of the Soviets seems a tremendous effort toward the future. That costly experience interests humanity as a whole and may liberate it from a frightful weight. The mere idea that it might be interrupted and forced to fail is insufferable to me, and that such a gigantic effort toward the never-yet-attempted might remain fruitless. The idols that they are overthrowing over yonder have long seemed to me the most oppressive among the false gods.

After the rehearsal of *Un Taciturne*, Martin du Gard's play, G. goes about repeating that he could never become interested in feelings he cannot experience himself.

Will he force me to think that homosexuals have more imagination than the . . . others? No, but they are more frequently called upon to exercise it.

30 October

Got up at five thirty after a more than passable night (despite yesterday evening's frightful itch). Oh, how glad I should be to do so every day, as in my youth! The irregularity of my habits comes less from my unrest than from an uneven constitution. I am at the mercy of my liver, my heart, my nerves; and probably in like measure of the temperature, of all Jupiter's changes in mood and frowns. Try to regulate one's life by such things, as boats do according to the wind and the tide? Absurd; but the finest resolutions and disciplines will not make me the same and capable of the same work, of the same fervor or inspiration after a sleepless night. Can those who sleep well be aware of the importance of sleep? I doubt whether those afflicted with insomnia could provide a single great leader, or statesman, or actor . . . in short, any one of those who must constantly remain "in the breach"? The soul's finest virtue needs to be soaked periodically in night.

Simply because I slept well I feel this morning in such a bright mood that I no longer recognize the harassed man I was yesterday. The night before, I had not gone to bed until two o'clock, having ab-

surdly allowed myself to be led into prolonging the evening with Groethuysen, Mme Théo, and Alix. The last named was herself worn out and I reproached myself considerably with having added to her fatigue, when I became aware of the hour. Groethuysen had asked to go over the translation I had just made at Cuverville of the dialogue between Faust and Chiron. We made the mistake of not getting down to this job until very late, after having talked interminably of Roger Martin du Gard's play.

And all day yesterday, having been awakened at six thirty by the noises of the courtyard, of the hall, etc., I dragged myself about miserably — very nervous about the reading of *Œdipe* that I was to give, that very day, before Pitoëff and his company.

Altogether, it went off very well. I read on the stage of the Théâtre Tristan Bernard in a steady voice, which I had not expected to be capable of that effort. But I had to leave immediately after, so that I do not very well know what the reactions may have been.

Groet recommends to me as a curtain-raiser (for *Œdipe* is not enough to fill the evening) Goethe's *Die Geschwister*.<sup>87</sup> And it is in order to read that short play, which I do not yet know, that I got up so early. I plunge into it.

"My life was dominated by three sentences that a very kindly relative to whom I had been entrusted kept repeating to me during my earliest childhood:

- "1. You are what you are.
- "2. It takes what it takes.
- "3. It will cost what it will cost."

It was Paul Desjardins who told us this at Pontigny, much better than I am doing here.

The son of F., my tailor, provides me with a wonderful start for a theatrical character while I am trying on a suit:

"It needs to be full here," I tell him.

And he says at once:

"Yes, full . . . while being slightly . . ."

And he does not finish his sentence.

I imagine this quirk, much more deeply rooted and hence much more powerfully comic than a purely verbal quirk, and more revealing of character: each of his thoughts is accompanied by its shadow; he agrees with a reservation, but a reservation that remains vague and only half formulated. He says:

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<sup>87</sup> *Brother and Sister*, a brief play about a devoted pair who think they are brother and sister but find they are not and marry.

"Obviously . . . yet on the other hand . . ."

"Yes . . . but nevertheless . . ."

An actor who struck just that note, it seems to me, would be irresistible; like Simon with the "And all . . . And all . . ." of the old man in Chekhov's *Sea Gull*.

31 October

At Roger's play,<sup>88</sup> rather lively protests were heard yesterday and the day before during the third act; first, at Thierry's exaggerated declarations to turn Joë away from the marriage, and again at the final revelation. One must expect to see these protests increase and become organized when people are no longer taken by surprise but know in advance toward what the play is heading. Many are those who deign to see in this only an indulgence toward the fashion of the day, the indiscreet playing-up of a "specialty" of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. They are not willing to admit reality, since they are among those who claim doubtless that things do not begin to exist until they are talked about. They acted the same toward Russia; and toward so many other things. The system that consists in not crediting, not taking into account, whatever is displeasing or embarrassing is too simple; and sooner or later it turns back on those who practice it. In regard to the sexual question, I am filled with wonder when they shout, like Souday: "That's the limit!" when the subject is just beginning to be timidly treated. Such people indirectly provide justification for the hypocrisy and reassuring camouflage practiced by so many writers, and even the most famous, beginning with Proust. Truth, so long hidden from view, seems indiscreetly troublesome as soon as it begins to show itself. The few shy depictions that certain bold writers risk are still so timid, so reticent, that they shock without in any way satisfying truth; and since truth cannot be suppressed by not being proclaimed, it will of necessity eventually be revealed.

But what does the majority's lack of understanding matter here! The truthful writer is concerned with showing what is and not what people wish were so, even though he were to deplore that the world is as it is. "Such things happen," Roger Martin du Gard made Armand say in his play, "such things happen, even to the best people." For fear of protests, Jouvet successively dropped the "even to the best people," then the following day, "such things happen." Where will that get him? He has ceased to say it; but still "such things happen" just the same, and the indignation of conformists can do nothing about it.

The majority of the audience are willing to admit that the two women sleep together (though this moreover was not a part of Roger's

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<sup>88</sup> *Un Taciturne* (A Man of Few Words), by Roger Martin du Gard.

intentions); but that Thierry should feel an attraction toward Joë, even unconsciously, and even though he resists it, this appears to them to be monstrous.

It is probably not exact that my thought has let itself be influenced by the need of my own self-defense. But rather my quest, before this problem that nature forced upon me and for which I had to find a solution.

An explanation is not necessarily an approbation; but most often people consider it useless to try to understand what they reprove.

1 November

I have just reread Bourdet's *La Prisonnière*, of which the first act at least offers such great analogies with Martin du Gard's play. The same quite indefinable mystery, the same switching onto wrong tracks as a result of a carefully contrived lack of understanding before an unsuspected, unsuspectable, and inadmissible proposition. How much more clever Bourdet seems to me here! That first act is extraordinarily well turned out. What ease! What grace! What sprightliness in the dialogue! . . . It is later on that Roger Martin du Gard gets ahead of him. However clever Bourdet's play may be, and perhaps because of its very cleverness, I am embarrassed by a sort of indirect flattery of the public's worst instincts. It seems here that the highest felicity can be achieved only in coitus. He pays no attention to this fact: that, even between people of "normal" tastes, perfect concomitance of the sexual spasm is extremely rare (among homosexuals likewise, moreover) and that the majority of couples cannot boast of having ever known it; basing the profound union of a couple on that alone is somewhat painfully paradoxical. I understand only too well the distress of Bourdet's hero when faced with the painful evidence of his inability to give his wife more joy, and his wife's inability to experience a sincere and complete joy with him. But that hero, whom he depicts at the outset as so noble, descends to the point of degradation when he bases his happiness on *that*. This secret drama is that of many couples and is what made Tolstoy say that of all tragedies the tragedy of the bedroom was by far the most frightful. There is nothing exceptional about it and there is no need to call upon homosexuality in this case; or else it would have to be granted that a very great number of men and women, apparently quite "normal," are unrecognized homosexuals . . . (besides, I am much inclined to believe this), ready to blow out their brains like Thierry rather than to recognize themselves as such. But is that really what people look for, and do they really look only for that — or even merely *especially* for that — in marriage? And is it not possible for marriage to become hell when it provides only that? I know certain respectable women, mothers of many children, who never did more than

lend themselves grudgingly<sup>89</sup> to the sexual embrace, and would not have lent themselves at all if that embrace had not been the condition *sine qua non* of a maternity they desired. (Unconscious Lesbians perhaps.) And, on the other hand, certain worn-out husbands who have ceased to play the conjugal role except out of duty, and to make sure of their wife's fidelity, and to be left alone. . . . All this is not even hinted at in *La Prisonnière*; it would seem, according to Bourdet, that heterosexuality is enough to ensure happiness. The drama, after all, might be the same without his heroine's being "a captive"; I am not even sure that it might not have been better.

5 November

No, do not see opportunism in this; or else this word must first be given a psychologically new meaning. It is rather a form of *amor fati* (made up of submission to fate and irrepressible optimism), which is doubtless the refuge of whatever remains in me of mysticism, of religious and adoring gratitude, and of what is commonly called "confidence in God" — a confidence in God that implies no appeal to Providence and does not permit itself to bend toward man the least distant of God's attributes. A little impatience enters into it likewise; that greedy impatience which makes the automobile or airplane racer rush toward the distant horizon with all the insistent precipitation he can muster. And the curiosity of any future whatever. . . . O heart full of loving hope, how can one fail to await what is to be, what I think will be — how can one fail to await it, to will it, and to dread it . . . ?

I think of Kant (it was indeed he, was it not?) who used to interrupt his accustomed walk *unter den Linden* of Königsberg to go and get news of the French Revolution. An identical anxious interrogation today bends all the attention of my whole self toward Russia.

That amplification of the emotion, of the thought, of which frequently consists *good writing* in French literature. It is to the opposite of that that my pen tends more and more.

I wanted to make of my sentence so sensitive an instrument that the mere displacement of a comma should be enough to destroy its harmony.

Cuerville, 8 November

I should like to know what is that *Saül et David* by Voltaire to which Pawlowsky alludes in his article on Giraudoux's *Judith*.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> This word appears in English.

<sup>90</sup> Jean Giraudoux's play, *Judith*, based on the story of Judith and Holofernes from the Apocrypha, had just had its premiere at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées. Voltaire wrote a rather ribald *Saul and David* (1763), which he variously attributed to English writers named Hut, Home, etc.



Oh, how much time I am wasting! though I tell myself constantly that evening is coming and my hours are counted. But I feel very tired; incapable of really good work, to which I should like to bring a fresh brain, washed clean of dross after soaking in sleep. If I were to deduct from my life the days that follow nights of insomnia . . .

As much as ever, more than ever, the image of nobility upsets me. I cannot read these letters of German students killed by the war, which the *N.R.F.* publishes in its last issue, without having sobs grip my throat. Who dares say that man without God is capable of less virtue, of less effort? Herbert Weisser's letters are admirable. I set down his name with respect. My entire desire is to form such souls by my writings; or at least, for they do not need me in order to exist, to help them to know themselves, to assert themselves.

Oh, I should like to know what became of that young brother to whom these letters are addressed, whether he was able to remain worthy of the teaching and example of such an elder . . . ?

Very beautiful likewise the letters from Franz Blumenfeldt to his mother.

"What does it avail me to be spared by bullets and shells if I lose my soul? *This is the way people would have expressed themselves in the past.*" What no longer has a name for him is nevertheless what it is important for him to preserve. Is there really any need to have recourse to idolatry?

I have often noted that the number of decent people (capable of heroism, abnegation, etc. . . .) is much greater than is thought. And they are the ones who give the most advantageous and also the most real image of humanity. And this is what keeps me from being a revolutionary; or at least what makes me be a revolutionary only with the greatest reluctance. I can wish for communism while still reproving the frightful means you propose for obtaining it. The "whoever accepts the end accepts the means" — even though it may have changed sides — still puts my heart very ill at ease. I do not like feeling hatred, injustice, and arbitrariness fighting at my side. You tell me: this cannot be achieved without that. Alas, I fear so! But it is too bad a moment to go through.

I am glad that in Russia at least that sorry chore is done, that at least *that* is in the past and that there is no need to repeat it! Whoever looks back, like Lot's wife mourning over the ruin of Sodom, runs the risk of being changed into a statue of tears.

Likewise Eurydice, Ariadne, or Creusa; the woman always stays behind. . . . This too I have already said.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 301, and Vol. II, p. 403.

9 November

The autumn here seems to me more beautiful than anywhere else; and this countryside never seems to me more beautiful than in autumn. The rains of this summer without heat have given the foliage longer life. I do not recall ever having seen the copper beeches more glorious. But already on the lawn lies the thickest of their adornment, like the clothing one lets fall before dying. What splendor, what a swan-song before the winter sleep! It hurts me to go away again, not to have been able to give more than two days to the peace that always greets me here. But two nights of nervous anguish. . . . I am less and less able to endure this climate. No love holds, nor any resolve, when faced with too bad conditions of health. Here I am like the trees in our orchard that no possible care can force to give fruit and that become a prey to cankers. I am furious to feel defeated, but am forced to beat a retreat.

Paris, 12 November

Yesterday went to hear Giraudoux's *Judith*. Strange play. I was with Robert Levesque. The theater was only half full although it was only the tenth performance.

This morning I write to Giraudoux:

My dear G.,

I was struck last night at finding tickets for your *Judith* so easily. After having heard the play I am less surprised that the theater was not better filled; it is only at one's own expense that one forces the lazy public to think. Only the happy few<sup>92</sup> will be grateful to you for having dared a "drama of ideas." It required your amazing art to form a parallel for the abstract debate and to clothe it with a drama of passion. Yes, as I write this, I wonder if, in your mind, the drama of passion did not precede the drama of ideas and if the latter was not added onto it. For (the drama of ideas overflowing the other, and by far, in significance, scope, and weight) the pyramid seems to rest on its point. And this moreover is what allows it not to rest at all: it oscillates, vibrates, and trembles, without ever tottering. . . .

Making a problem of religious metaphysics turn upon a question of very special psychology . . . I accept this, but remain none the less embarrassed: if it is easy to admit that Judith should fall in love with Holophernes, on the other hand it is not easy to understand how she gets to the point of killing him. "Through love," she asserts. She has to tell us for us to know it. She proclaims it the more vehemently the harder it is for her to convince us. This remains subtle and does not strike the mind at once. As for me, I cannot but regret that the "mira-

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<sup>92</sup> This expression appears in English.

cle" is not based on an evidence that would render flagrant its falseness.

I do not send my letter. I should have to add that this play, though more important than *Siegfried* and *Amphitryon*, does not satisfy me as its predecessors did. Even the very serious debate involved seems intellectual play, a joust. The emotion of certain scenes hardly rises above the flickering and shimmering with which an over-precious style clothes them.

Have oneself treated — or kill oneself. No other possible solution to the problem raised by the case of Roger Martin du Gard's *Un Taciturne* — his cousin declares peremptorily in an article (moreover almost excellent) in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*.<sup>93</sup> As if all the "Thierrys" we know, and all those we do not know, had not each one found a personal solution. As if, in the play itself, Roger Martin du Gard had not taken care to make his Armand ("the only reasonable character in the play") exclaim: "You cannot make me believe that if Joë had reciprocated. . . ." Mme Théo remarked very judiciously that it is not only the discovery of his own love that pushes Thierry to suicide, but perhaps also, but perhaps above all, immediately recognizing it to be hopeless; and his jealousy. Thierry must have been dreadfully absorbed by his business not to become aware of his inclinations until so late. The characters of tragedy are always, more or less, idle people. It is hard to imagine a Hamlet harassed by the need to earn his living. The "to be or not to be" is a fruit of leisure.

26 November

Very pleasant lunch, yesterday, with Green and Robert de Saint Jean. Conversation without restraint, nor, moreover, any effort to seem more at one's ease than one was. What long kept me from speaking freely to Green is the extraordinary impression of purity that emanates from his voice, his eyes, his whole person. I tell him this. He is astonished and annoyed by it; and I am amused, for, likewise, I once suffered and was annoyed to feel conversations freeze up in my vicinity. Not so many years ago Mme Bussy still told me of the reserve that my appearance called forth.

When I most enjoy writing in this notebook is when I have just written in it.

. . . Then go days and weeks without opening it.

In the December *N.R.F.*, the continuation of *Élise*. It is the result of an accomplished art. It does not seem to me that Jouhandeau has

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<sup>93</sup> The cousin is Maurice Martin du Gard.

ever written anything better, or even so significant and revelatory. And yet how much I already liked his *Veronica*!<sup>94</sup>

I do not believe that he invented anything, in one or the other. But this feeling reflection of a peculiar reality remains strangely personal to him, and this gift of sympathy which I find only in the most exquisite souls: revelatory at once of the soul he is reflecting and of himself. How I reproach myself for not having managed to find time to frequent him more as he so often invited me to do!

In his article of today on J. Schlumberger, Maurice Martin du Gard quotes a sentence from Henri Franck that I believe I did not yet know (otherwise I hold a grudge against my memory for having let it escape): "The life of men 'emancipated' from dogma is a hundred times more painful, more hesitant, more tormented, than the life of a religious soul." Yet as I copy it down here, not only do I cease to find it so remarkable, but also it seems to me that the obvious truth it notes argued in favor of returning to dogma — in Franck's mind at least. I was distorting its meaning when I first saw in it this sort of protest: I know very well that by emancipating myself from dogma I am going toward a more hesitant and tormented life. . . . And how could it be otherwise since I have to blaze my trail myself, by which others, after me, will be able to pass. Do not think, then, that if I emancipate myself, I am doing so for more license. . . .

That the greater comfort can militate in favor of acceptance seems to me abject. And it is not for greater comfort that I should be glad to accept the Soviet constraint. There too there is implicit recognition of a dogma, but of a dogma that my reason can approve.

#### ARIADNE

Thus you will leave. I shall remain alone awaiting you, though knowing that you are never to come back.

30 November

The great strength of Nietzsche. . . . How I feel constantly hindered by sympathy. Constantly feeling that my thought can and must bruise those I love. Those who go forward without fear of hurting others, I admire and envy. Pacific works are not in my line. I feel myself and valorous only when in a state of struggle.

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<sup>94</sup> "*Veronica*," deceptively naïve dialogues between Véronique and M. Godeau, appeared in the *N.R.F.* for July 1931. "*Élise*," the recollections and reflections of a little girl, appeared in two issues of the *N.R.F.*, November and December 1931.

2 December

The *Mercure de France* suddenly deigns to notice me. After some considerations of a general nature, the author of the article carps at my "attitude," which he condemns, but none the less recognizes to be "interesting." Other critics speak of my "influence," most often to pass censure on it. As to the very value of my writings, I tell you they do not take heed of it. This is partly because they are not qualified to judge of it. And yet that is the only thing that matters.

Berlin, 6 December

Yesterday evening went to see a film: *Pitchler the Banker*.<sup>95</sup> Pallenberg reveals himself in it as less surprising than in the play in which I first admired him, in Berlin. As I told Mme Sternheim of my rapture:

"Oh, you should above all see him in Molière," she told me. "He is incomparable in *Le Malade imaginaire*.<sup>96</sup> Particularly in the famous scene, you know: '. . . Noodles! my brother. . . .'"

Then in reply to my stupefaction:

"Oh yes, I must tell you that one of his most amusing specialties is adding to the text. He is especially marvelous when he is inventing."

Roger Martin du Gard, at whose house I am lunching, is deeply struck by a letter from Claudel that Jouvet had just received and passed on to him. The letter, of which he reads us a copy, fulminates against a "filthy" writer, of whom Claudel does not want "even to recall the name," the author of a play that it is enough for him to know through an article by Brisson to be able to judge abominable.

At once Claudel withdraws from Jouvet his authorization to put on *L'Annonce faite à Marie*.<sup>97</sup> So be it!

There is no occasion whatever to try to "excuse" Claudel. I like him and want him thus, scolding easy, lukewarm Catholics who try to compromise. We can admit him, admire him; he owes it to himself to vomit us. As for me, I would rather be vomited than vomit.

<sup>95</sup> Doubtless *Die armen Sünder* (*The Poor Sinner*), adapted by Alfred Polgar from the novel *The Embezzlers* by the Russian playwright Valentin Katayev. The film was directed by Fritz Kortner and produced by Arnold Pressburger. In it Max Pallenberg plays the part of chief accountant in a city administration. At the same time he was playing on the Berlin stage the role of a bank president in a play entitled *Eins, Zwei, Drei!* which Ferenc Molnár wrote for him.

<sup>96</sup> *The Imaginary Invalid*.

<sup>97</sup> Or, more exactly, he insinuates not without cleverness that after the play by the "filthy" author, Jouvet will probably not be very eager to put on *L'Annonce*, leaving him to interpret these words as he wishes. [A.] Claudel's play has been translated as *The Tidings Brought to Mary*.

Howbeit, Claudel may well become indignant over *Un Taciturne*, but, at bottom, it is really *Jean Barois* that he has it in for.<sup>98</sup>

14 December

Thérive opens his article in *Le Temps* on Saint Exupéry with several quotations from me; there is not one of them that is exact. Yet each one is put in quotation-marks.

But everywhere it is the same: out of ten quotations from me, eight are false. I read with amazement this evening, in an article by Jaloux, this incomprehensible sentence: ". . . then, as M. André Gide has written: '*the jealous professions of happiness*'" (for "*the jealous possession*"). Is it surprising if, as a result, I am considered a difficult writer to interpret?

I cannot succeed in finding a certain page of prose which ought to figure, I believe, in the second volume of my *Œuvres complètes*.<sup>99</sup> For it must date from before 1900. I was rather fond of it, having worked over it for a rather long time in order to satisfy myself, and, after more than thirty years, remember the first sentence, about which I had rather lively discussions with Marcel Drouin. Here it is:

"Cold on my hands but for them warm, I feel, ah! in that brownish water, those living happy roots."<sup>100</sup> I claimed to have achieved there, despite syntax, an almost Latinly satisfying construction, perfectly logical and not allowing of any ambiguity; saying everything and in a subtle, deeply felt, and amusing manner and holding a surprise; a living sentence, respecting the order of sensations and reflections, etc. And the rhythm! . . . What rhythm!! I tirelessly recited to myself my beautiful, twisted sentence all day long, marveling at that succession of dactyls broken, in the manner of Latin hexameters, after "*je sens*" to spread out on flat ground at first: "*ah! dans cette eau brunie*" – then the succession of dactyls resuming: "*ces vivantes racines heureuses*."

And I confess that that sentence still delights me today.

18 December

I receive *La Revue musicale* with my "*Notes sur Chopin*." Despite his promise, Prunières did not suppress, in a note on Schumann, the excessive expression: "his nauseating vulgar modulations," which seems

<sup>98</sup> Roger Martin du Gard's novel, *Jean Barois* (1913), portrays most effectively an intellectual's revolt against Catholicism.

<sup>99</sup> *The Complete Works of André Gide*, in fifteen quarto volumes, were undertaken by the Librairie Gallimard in 1932 and edited by Louis Martin-Chauffier.

<sup>100</sup> "*Froide à mes mains mais pour elles tiède, je sens, ah! dans cette eau brunie, ces vivantes racines heureuses.*"

to me today even more unjust; or at least one must immediately add that for Schumann (as for Beethoven and so many others) *that was not the question*. It was enough to praise Chopin's originality; why do so at the expense of Schumann?

23 December

The exquisite Marie-Thérèse is helping me to put some order into my library. How many books I do not use and shall never use! I should bless the fire that would deliver me from their dreadful congestion.

There are very few things, truly, which I cherish. Only I do not know how to get rid of them decently; and it is sometimes merely to leave them that I go away on a trip.

24 December

I am reading with very great interest Jean Rostand's book on *L'État présent du transformisme*.<sup>101</sup> If I noted here all my readings, I ought also to speak of Sartiaux's *Joseph Turmel*, in which most remarkable pages (94 ff.) on falsehood, which confirm in every regard my opinion and what I have often noted: the love of Truth (I mean historical Truth) belongs to Protestants and Jews; it is but very rarely found among Catholics. The explanation Sartiaux gives of this is excellent. I had not thought of this:

"When God in person on Mount Sinai solemnly dictated to his people the precepts of the Law, which remained the foundations of moral theology in the Church, he did not say to them: Thou shalt not lie. . . . Falsehood figures only in the ninth commandment . . . and in a very limited form: 'thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.' Falsehood is not counted among the capital sins (that is, in the etymological sense, among those which are the source of all the others); it is not considered *in itself* as a *grievous sin*," etc., etc.

One would have to copy out the whole passage.

"What constitutes for the Church the *gravity* of falsehood is not essentially the fact of lying; it is its evil effects on faith and charity."

With Roger Martin du Gard I can let myself go and be natural. There is no one today whose presence is a greater comfort and consolation to me. With him I never feel that I am wasting my time; our conversation never seems to me idle.

I take him to task in regard to certain assertions or insinuations of *Un Taciturne*. When he makes his Wanda exclaim: "How disgusting!" at the mere idea of possible carnal relations with Thierry, the public, not satisfied with deducing that her inclination is directed perhaps exclusively toward women, may see in this outburst an instinctive, spon-

<sup>101</sup> *The Present State of Transformism*.

taneous, irresistible admission of a truth not only peculiar to Wanda, but capable of being generalized — the revelation of that physical distaste which any normal woman feels (would feel, according to Roger) for a homosexual (even when the latter has not recognized himself to be so). It is that distaste that I dispute; or at least I dispute that it is fatal and not merely peculiar to Wanda. But Roger is convinced that it must be so; and the public approves, it goes without saying. Yet Roger agrees that the normal man feels no repulsion for a Lesbian. Reality has given me many examples of homosexuals desired by women; but in each of the cases I cite him Roger deigns to see only a proof of the abnormality of those women.

But in this case again, in this case above all, it is essential to make a distinction between pederasts and inverts.<sup>102</sup>

### Cuerville

Jammes, in search of a publisher, asks me to intervene in order to place a book that is "very gay in spots" which he has just finished writing "with considerable gusto and *corrente calamo*." He has created in it "a character by the name of Élie de Nacre."

"He is," he tells me, "a fictionalized *you* who plays sidesplitting tricks on everyone." And he adds: "You will be the first to laugh."

He asks my authorization to call his book "L'Antigide."

And since I reply at once that I consent (for it will not be said that I am keeping a child from romping), I receive a new letter which warns me: "Even if my mirror sometimes has a good time, you will forgive its *deforming whims* by reason of the sublime death that I help you to 'achieve' in Spain," etc., etc. To get to this: "I have not yet offered this book to any publisher. If you dangled it before Grasset's or Flammarion's eyes, and the request for it came from one of them through you, that would be pluperfect diplomatically."

I preciously preserve these two letters in order to convince myself that I did not invent them.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, p. 246.

<sup>103</sup> The letters have in fact been published in their entirety in the *Correspondance 1893-1938* between Jammes and Gide, edited by Robert Mallet (1948). *L'Antigide* was brought out by Éditions du Mercure de France in 1932.



2 January

**T**he Cape is rounded. These holidays make me gloomy. Family gatherings, absence or unavailability of the few I should have enjoyed seeing. . . . I had gone to Cuverville on Christmas Day in the hope of spending the end of the year there. With an incipient case of grippe, without any work under way, incapable of enough fervor to launch into a new work, the cold, the fog, the lack of comfort conquered me in two days. Returned to Paris, where at least I was able to busy myself with Malraux on the first volumes of my *Œuvres complètes*. Complicated, painstaking work that calls for sustained attention. Inappreciable help of Malraux; without him I should never have managed. I should have liked to note here many reflections inspired by going over my first books (particularly *Paludes* and my *Journal*). I put it off until later.

Yesterday morning, sudden revelation of what could and should soon be a book on Communism. Refutation of the usual arguments. Mistake of trying to attribute to Geneviève, to an imaginary hero, opinions that are now mine. My *Nouvelle École des femmes* must be relieved of them and remain entirely emotional in interest (if I may express it thus).<sup>1</sup>

8 January

Between Carcassonne and Marseille I reread *Andromaque* (in the charming little Racine that Schiffrin gave me as I left).

Dreary wait in the Tarascon buffet, where I am writing this while dining.

But I no longer take any pleasure in chatting with this notebook. I am with it as with a friend too long forsaken and to whom you have nothing to say because he has not followed you. Now that, far from Paris, I am freer, I want to get back into the habit, for a time, of conversing a bit with it every day. If only in order not to let my pen grow too dull. Nothing flatter than that image. If I stop over it, I lose courage. Let us go beyond. I was of late — I still am — so tired that my thought dragged along and remained undeveloped. Will the time ever return when it used to escape at once and joyfully from my brain to alight winged on the paper? Occasionally and too often I resign myself to never writing again. The publication of my *Œuvres complètes*, on which I have been working considerably for a month, has the annoying effect of inviting me to silence, as if everything I had to say was said.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New School for Wives* was eventually entitled *Geneviève* when it appeared in 1939.

I want not to repeat myself and fear works of decadence in which can be measured the slow ebbing of vigor. Doubtless, as soon as I am rested, I shall disown these sentences and this semi-resignation which prompts them today. But there is another reason for my silence: the too keen interest I take in events under way and particularly in the situation of Russia turns my mind away from literary preoccupations. To be sure, I have just reread *Andromaque* with an indescribable rapture, but in the new state that occupies my mind at present, such charming games will have no further justification. This is what I keep telling myself, and that the age in which literature and the arts could flourish is past. At least I glimpse a different literature and poetry, other permissions, other impulses of enthusiasm and fervor, new paths . . . but I doubt if my heart is young enough to skip along them.

What seems to me most obsolete are loving hesitations.

11 January

Most often it happens that one attributes to others only the feelings of which one is capable oneself . . . but this is the way one blunders. Among the refugees whom we aided at the Foyer Franco-Belge, there were very few who did not attribute the most interested motives to our charitable activity; in the eyes of all we were paid employees who, besides, took a little graft on the side, at their expense. What would have been the good of speaking of disinterestedness, of love of duty, of the need of doing service in our way and of reducing suffering? We should have been laughed at.

Knowing how to put oneself "in the place of others." X. puts himself there all right. . . . But it is always *himself* that he puts there.

Roquebrune, 12 January

Great and fine figure of my Uncle Charles, whom I went to see before leaving Paris. For some time he has been suffering from a cancer of the esophagus and is getting weaker day by day.

"Is it very painful?"

"It is not painful at all. But I am beginning to enter the descending curve." (He is entering his eighty-fifth year!)

Moreover he works as much and as well as ever.

His eyes have taken on a sweet look, a sort of amenity that I really believe I had never known him to have. I should like to be able to talk to him to tell him of my admiration, my affection. . . . But how hard it is to make oneself heard by him! And I am not alluding so much to his physical deafness as to that sort of instinctive refusal to listen, to believe, against which stumbles everything that is said to him, and

which, even in his youth, discouraged those best disposed toward him. But suddenly he makes up his mind to talk a bit, and as I tell him that he ought to consent to be X-rayed:

"You wrote utterly inexact things about your grandfather. That he died without ever having consented to call in doctors is absolutely false. He saw many of them, on the contrary; masses of them; and even, at the end of his life, on the advice of Cousin Pascal, he fell into the hands of a mesmerizer who came and made passes over him."

Alas, everything I said of him is what had been told me by my aunt. But I hasten here to rectify this and shall try to retouch the portrait that I give of him in *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . (according to hearsay).

Not a word about what concerns him; but probably it weighs heavily on him. Is the portrait I sketched of him inexact? I do not believe so. Thibaudet sees in my portrait a "hatred" that was never in my heart.<sup>2</sup> Quite the contrary. That portrait, however severe it may be, bears but very few reflections of the dreadful indictment my aunt forced me to hear, every time I saw her and almost to the very last moments of her life. The accusations she made — some of which, alas! were only too well founded, but which her passion exaggerated to the point of absurdity — became toward the end so painful for me, especially after Paul's death (for which she considered my uncle responsible), that I saw less and less of her. She failed dreadfully to recognize what constituted my uncle's extraordinary value and deigned to see nothing but insensitivity in his severity, in his disinterestedness nothing but hypocrisy, and nothing but twaddle in his theories. Those two creatures equally admirable in many ways, equally ill-adapted to conjugal happiness, equally un-understanding, as little as possible designed to get along together, remained all their life lamentably opposed to each other (with a sort of resigned, pathetic reconciliation two days before my aunt's death).

That couple, profoundly unhappy because of one another, remained utterly faithful to each other and allowed me to grasp the fact that the worst conjugal dramas are perhaps not those of jealousy.

14 January

Vexed for several days by my memory's inability to recall completely Gluck's aria: "Let yourself be touched by my tears." However I go about it, I get misled into a modulation that keeps me from getting back to the initial key and finishing the melody on the tonic. Verify it as soon as I get back.

Seraphic azure. Not a breath of wind. With such a sea, one feels almost guilty not to be sailing somewhere.

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<sup>2</sup> See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, p. 407.

*15 January*

Working over that long musical phrase at leisure, during a fortunate insomnia between Marseille and Paris, I succeed in reconstructing it without having to have recourse to the text. And now it appears to me quite simple, innocent, and without any other pitfall than the one my own complication slipped in.

*16 January*

I go back to see my uncle, who has declined considerably since my last visit. I find him quite weakened by fever. But his mind remains the same, as does his immalleability, if I may be permitted the expression. Looking for something pleasant to say to him, to shout to him rather, for he hears with more and more difficulty — and while he is taking a bit of orangeade, all solid food being forbidden him:

"They made it very well at Uzès."

"What did they make well?"

"Lemonade."

"Where?"

"At Uzès."

"Who told you so?"

"No one at all; I remember. . . ."

"Well, what do you know about it, then?"

"But I used to drink it myself."

"You have been back there, then?"

"No, I remember what I drank when I was a child."

"They didn't make lemonade."

"Yes they did; I remember it very well. It was a rice lemonade."

"Why rice?"

"To take away the bitterness of the lemon; they used to boil rice and pour the boiling water on cut-up lemons."

"But they did that only for intestinal upsets. You were not ill at Uzès; why should they have made it for you?"

"Well, it is certain that I have drunk it and that I found it very good."

My uncle eventually granted that, in fact, it wasn't bad.

And do not go and see in that resistance to others an effect of age: I have always known him that way.

This bit of dialogue is an example of what almost all conversations were with my uncle, and of the extreme difficulty one had in making oneself understood by him. I believe the fact that he had never been ill greatly increased that sort of impenetrability. Always equal and consistent and faithful to himself, he could understand others only through thought, and understand of others only thoughts. Howbeit quite capable of emotion and of the most sublime and keenest emotions, but of

a general nature; he remained as unconcerned as possible with the individual and what differentiates. Not only did it fail to interest him; I even believe he doubted that it could have any importance, even exist outside the footless imagination of writers. He lived among entities. Even love and friendship had to depersonalize themselves in order to find access to his heart, which never beat so rapidly as for the collective.

18 January

The sentences at which comprehension stops short and even the most enlightened sympathy stumbles. . . . There is perhaps none in which more perfidy has been seen than the one from my dialogue with Félix-Paul Grève:

"I prefer making others act to acting myself."

If I explain it, I shall appear to be exculpating myself. What is more natural, however, than to say to an adventurer whom one wants to hold at a distance: action belongs to you, thought to me? The latter promotes the former. As soon as I act I limit myself, etc. What else could I say to him that would be immediately understood by him? After all, I couldn't preach to him — and surely he would not have listened to me. . . .

Moreover, did I not reproduce his triumphant reply?

No, that sentence did not "escape" me. One has only to think of the person to whom I said it, of the person I was in Grève's eyes, of the circumstances, etc. If it were to do over, I could not say anything different; at most perhaps I should explain a bit better? The astonishing thing is that Grève, in answering me, merely recited the teaching of my *Nourritures*. By taking over my role, he pushed me to the right. On the whole, I took cover.

"If it may be that my teaching leads to crime, I prefer that it should be you who commit the crime." This is what my sentence meant. Grève was playing the role of helot in my presence. Through self-esteem I tried to save face; but I felt his advantage and that he got the better of me. I was overcome by my "disciple" and was disavowing my ethic if that was where it was to lead. The conflict in feelings was too complex in this case for anyone to be able to draw an argument from my sentence, it seems to me. Seeing an affirmation, a profession of faith, the declaration of an ethic in that way of beating a retreat is risky, to say the least. But the critic remains free to see in my declaration an "involuntary confession."

20 January

The flesh, less demanding as age comes on, leaves, it may be, the mind freer. One judges such things more sanely, but also more un-

justly those who are dominated by the senses. When one has escaped it one ceases to understand that domination and, consequently, to admit it in others. How many uncompromising judgments are due simply to a cold temperament!

What I am writing here strikes me as very banal; I am writing it only to write something, in this café where I have come to await the opening of the Vieux-Colombier's doors at ten o'clock (I am invited to see Cocteau's film). And besides, it is not at all true that I feel less indulgent today, now that I am myself less tormented. I remember too well what it was like to be so! But at least I can better understand the lack of understanding of those who have never been so, or only a little.

Another thing I know, now that I have received so many confidences, is how far it is from being sufficient to be heterosexual in order to be . . . normal; and how often, all things considered, the simple and natural practices of physical love yield to complications!

21 January

Again insomnia. Nervous system over-tense, at bay. These last few nights impossible to find sleep until dawn and when the whole house is awaking; and this despite all precautions and what I take to try to sleep, which stultifies me without making me lose consciousness a moment. In the morning, however, I do not feel too tired and I should work, if only bores would leave me alone. I am going to try to arrange my life otherwise. This necessity of going out for my meals (and there is no restaurant near) wears me out. My mornings are completely devoured by correspondence, telephone calls, etc. I must not make myself accessible until after noon and ask the concierge not to bring up the morning mail. *Curiosity* is my greatest enemy. It sometimes happens that I close my door to everyone, and then run to the door at the first ring. . . . Indispensable discipline. And stop telling myself, as I did recently in cowardly fashion, that henceforth I shall write nothing worth while and that my work is finished.

22 January

Article by Haraucourt (very kindly and quite unexpected, that Eugène Rouart sends me, taken from some newspaper or other) on my *Cedipe*. He sees in my play, above all, an opposition between free will and predestination. Many will do likewise and through my fault; for I am well aware, and particularly became aware at the rehearsals and through Pitoëff's interpretation, that I indiscreetly emphasized that obvious conflict — which tormented me greatly in my youth, but which long ago ceased to disturb me and which, in my very play, seems to me less important, less tragic, than the struggle (which moreover is closely related to it) between individualism and submission to

religious authority. It is curious that the first conflict just happens to appear with most force in religious souls (particularly those of Christian background), for the ancients could likewise believe in predestination, but without thinking they could, or should, elude it. Perhaps if I had not raised that question at all — the hero's struggle against Tiresias, of individuality against religious ethics, it might have been even more tragic; more apparent in any case. . . . But these problems are closely and inextricably linked. No matter: whether or not one is disturbed by determinism (either by accepting it or by denying it), the drama remains the same and the opposition between the perspicacious anti-mystic and the believer, between the man blind through faith and the one who tries to answer the enigma, between him who submits himself to God and him who opposes Man to God. The other cause "will soon be once and for all won," Haraucourt says quite rightly. It already is and consequently ceases to disturb us. If that were the only thing "at issue" in my drama, it would not have had any contemporary interest and would justify those who deign to see in it only intellectual juggling. Moreover, I foresee a time when *ethical* problems will interest only a few timid souls.

23 January

Odious bustle in my brain. A swarm of insignificant occupations, as persistent as flies, from which you cannot get free until they have pumped your brain dry. I cannot get myself to set to work before having satisfied them; and since there are constantly new ones coming up, I have ceased to do any work at all.

25 January

These young people who send or bring you a manuscript and ask advice of you do not know how much they put you out. That is their excuse. It takes me hours to get to know a book satisfactorily; when it is not so bad that I can judge it from the first pages and drop it at once, when I give myself to it, I do so wholly. And my work, once interrupted, does not allow itself to be picked up immediately afterward. There is a prolonged back-wash in my mind. . . . And also, afterward, I must write, or receive the author and talk. I have there, on a shelf in my library, fourteen begging manuscripts, which, if my eyes happen to light on them, make me long to be dead.

"You speak French beautifully," Mme N. said to him.

Whereupon he paused a moment, and then, sweetly, with a modest air, said:

"Oh! Madame, I do not speak it — *je balbute*."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Obviously he intended to say: *je balbutie* — "I stammer."

*26 January*

At two thirty I get up staggering with fatigue and dress. Impossible to get to sleep, in spite of the double dose of sleeping-potion. And it has been this way every night for a week. What can I do? Whether I go to bed late or early, whether I eat little or much at dinner, drink wine, beer, or water, it is all the same. And spasms, twitchings, discomforts. . . . Before dressing I got up ten times, to wash, to close the window, to open it again, to remake my bed, to drink some milk, to urinate, to write a letter. . . . It is exasperating, exhausting. In a moment I am going to stretch out on my bed fully dressed. . . . I give up leaving tomorrow for Cuverville, where insomnia is accompanied by even more painful tortures. My nerves feel as tense as the string of a bow. Sleep comes in the early morning, and when I have to get up at about eight, I do so with an inexpressible lassitude and feeling of age. While I am writing these lines, merely to occupy my mind, I have trouble clearly making out the letters I am forming — and I got stronger lenses just three months ago. Under such conditions, what becomes of work?!

I am beginning to understand very well the method of Balzac, or Pierre Louÿs, or of Proust — for in the afternoon I am capable of a deep sleep.<sup>4</sup>

*27 January*

It is not only man's work that it is essential to make rules for, but also, but especially, his leisure. "Thou shalt earn thy bread in the sweat of thy brow." Basing yourself on the authority of those words, you invite us to see in that necessity of work an effect of the divine malediction; and even, by making man labor, you thought you were following out the intentions of God.

"The cult of the machine." It is the word "cult" that stops you. Yet you have long accepted the simple tool. What the plow or the sickle is to the isolated man, the agricultural machine is to the community. The instrument of a collective labor is just as important to that new society, and to keep effort from being isolated, as the first instrument forged for solitary labor. It is no more possible to imagine that new society without the machine than the isolated cultivator without tools.

You consider monstrous the interest that the workman takes in those statistical tables and seeing him every evening consulting the lists that will tell him whether or not his factory has had a better production than some other one. But you consider it quite natural that the petty bourgeois in France should anxiously pore over the market quotations every evening, wondering whether he ought to sell or buy, that the office clerk should eagerly wait for the "final racing results" or, if

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<sup>4</sup> All three of these writers worked at night and slept in the daytime.



we are in Italy, the list of winning numbers. Both of them make their happiness depend on a figure decided by chance. The figure that is so important for the Russian worker to know is the one achieved by his work. And you consider that ridiculous?

"No heroes." Such, I am told, is their watchword. And being unwilling to separate myself from them, I prefer to believe in a misunderstanding. For though I understand the danger of trying to distinguish oneself, I cannot believe such a decapitation advantageous for the community. Is it not good to admit that in a Communist society, too, there may be peace-makers? . . . Let us suspend judgment until better informed.

Stalin's speech (summer of 1931) answers these objections admirably.

*Cuerville, 28 January*

Alarming rumors are going about; country people are getting worried; tradesmen cannot get payment. . . .

"Is it true what they say, that we are going to have war again?"

Three times in the last four days this question has been asked of Em., who hastens to reassure as best she can.

"No country is in a state to make war today," she replies.

"But then why have matches gone up two sous?"

*29 January*

Hatred of mysticism . . . yes, doubtless. And yet my anguish is almost mystical in nature. That so many sufferings should remain vain, this idea is insufferable to me; it keeps me awake at night; wakes me up. . . . I cannot, I will not admit it.

*Cuerville, 30 January*

So I have read the anti-Soviet issue of *Je suis partout*.<sup>5</sup> I read it almost entire. If perhaps here and there I skipped twenty lines, that is the most.

I am willing to take as exact the information given in all these articles. They prove by A plus B the failure of the new regime in the U.S.S.R. But then, if the Five-Year Plan, according to them, leads to a complete fiasco, why these fears?

You tell me that two thirds of the agricultural machines coming from the *Red Poutilov* or the Stalingrad factory are almost immediately unusable, that the coal extracted from the Donets Basin never gets anywhere, and that the bad functioning of the transport system causes a frightful stoppage. Well then, why are you frightened?

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<sup>5</sup> A popular French weekly magazine, *I Go Everywhere*.

You cannot at one and the same time make me tremble before a monster and prove to me that that monster does not exist.

If you are alarmed none the less and try to alarm us, it is because you know very well that the leaders of the U.S.S.R., the first to be informed of all these disappointed expectations, immediately set to work to remedy them; that what was true ceases to be so today or will cease to be so tomorrow; so that you are right to tremble.

And what do you expect me to think of certain fiascos that you take pleasure in pointing out? The fiasco of the "struggle against religion," for instance. You quote triumphantly this "confession" of a party paper (*Le Sans-Dieu*<sup>6</sup>):

"Often the peasant has not enough money for the bare necessities, but he always finds enough for the priest. . . . In the village of Valievka the peasants spent ten rubles per family for the feast of the church. . . . In the village of Kolestovka they gathered together fifty rubles for the needs of the church, but do not give a kopek for the repair of the bridge. . . ."

Do you really think there is anything there to make me shout: "Hoorah for religion!"? That serves only to show me the difficulty, and at the same time the advisability, of the work undertaken: a complete reform, not only of the systems of production, but also of the very people and of their "mentality."

You accuse the Intourist interpreters and guides of bad faith because they show only the good results of the plan; but you looked upon it as quite natural that our Colonial Exposition<sup>7</sup> should exhibit only those things on which you thought France could pride herself. This is because here, overlooking the abuses of power and the sufferings of which you prefer to be ignorant — which permitted and were hidden by the exterior — you approved the end achieved, whereas, in regard to the end sought over there, you are very much afraid that the U.S.S.R. may achieve it; and it is in the hope of preventing it from being achieved that you shout so loudly that it will not be achieved.

Yet I do not want to pretend not to understand you. By pointing out the presumed unreality of that mirage, you are fighting the hopes it arouses and authorizes. Mirage, as you say. . . . It is enough for me to glimpse it in order to wish, as fervently as I am able, for it to become reality.

5 February

Have I ever felt more master of my thought and of my pen? With sleep and time to myself, I should have genius. Before the sleeping-potion, I ought to give myself an injection of scopolamine to put my

<sup>6</sup> *The Godless.*

<sup>7</sup> Held in Paris in 1931.

organism in the mood to welcome it. Instead of which, my nerves revolt and protest against the action of the medicament. Dreadful nights.

*Brussels, Saturday*

Every degree between hatred and love, between the hypo and the hyper, between any feeling whatever and its contrary, as in physiology between the too much and the not enough. We must add, in psychology, intermittences and interferences, and always possibilities of doubt as to the sincerity not only of the expression of one's feelings, but of the very feelings one experiences, or that one thinks one is experiencing, or that one would like to experience or not to experience. All of which makes for art, poetry, etc., but hardly makes for preciseness, certainty, science, etc.

Every degree between snobbery, the desire to frequent people of high society, famous people, and the desire to flee them on the other hand. My Uncle Charles often expressed that irresistible withdrawal before the famous. He ceases to frequent a friend as soon as that friend achieves fame. There enters into this the feeling that that friend, whom you used to help, can now get along without you. As for taking advantage of him, of his new situation, some pride or other turns you away from what might be helpful to you. All this mixed up, delicately blended, explains more or less that sort of reverse anti-snobbery (in which I greatly resemble my uncle) and the slowing down of some of my former relationships.

8 February

Back from Brussels and Antwerp.

Many critics have been shocked by these words in my preface to *Vol de nuit*:<sup>s</sup> "I am particularly grateful to him for throwing light on this paradoxical truth, for me considerably important psychologically: that man's happiness lies not in freedom but in the acceptance of a duty." They immediately exclaim that this truth has nothing paradoxical about it and has on the contrary been long recognized, accepted (by them at least), and that what is paradoxical is my taking so long to become aware of it. But the thing they are not aware of is that the paradox is discovering this "truth" at the extremity of individualism. I should even like to add that if this truth does not seem to them paradoxical, it is because they do not fully understand it; and that it takes on a totally different aspect according to whether one accepts or discovers it. What one discovers or rediscovers for oneself are living truths; tradition urges us to accept mere dead remains of truths.

Finally, if they have so fully accepted the fact that man's happiness lies in submission, I cease to understand what revolts them in the ethics of the Russian plan.

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<sup>s</sup> Saint Exupéry's novel, *Night Flight*.

9 February

Tremendous joy at knowing Roger finally liberated from *Les Thibault* — or at least resolved to reduce to two the number of volumes left him to write.<sup>9</sup> An excellent letter announced to me the happy solution he had just glimpsed, which immediately afterward he rushes to tell me at length. This solution strikes me as most happy, infinitely preferable to that long succession of books he originally planned; not only more significant but likely to throw light upon the significance of the earlier books. The abundant matter he is giving up can serve for other works, which he will no longer feel obliged to write as a *continuation* of the first ones. What he is keeping of his former outline will gain by being condensed in this way. Finally, that condensation will force him to *declare himself* much more. He seems already rejuvenated, exalted by this perspective of liberation; howbeit more friendly, more smiling, more charming than ever.

In the January issue of *L'Émancipation*, this sentence by Uncle Charles, taken from somewhere or other and quoted separately:

"It amounts to depreciating the role of co-operation to make it serve individualistic ends. Its true role is to serve collective ends."

Obviously. But since it appears to me that individualism itself, when well understood, must serve the community, it is essential to me to preserve its rights, and I consider opposing it to communism a mistake. That opposition does not at all appear to me to be fatal, and I am not willing to admit it. I say: "individualism . . . well understood." I am applying myself to understanding it better.

The specific value of the individual. Of the danger for society of not taking account of it. Nothing to do with the usual conception of individualism, which its adversaries are willing to grant us.

Those who condemn me have most often not read my books and know me only by what they have heard say that I was. How can I protest, make them understand that I am and remain very different from that, and my influence other than what they fancy?

I should like also to be judged by my texts and not by false quotations that are made from them. Is this asking too much? Here, as ever, the false finds more credit than the true and wins out.

With the best intentions in the world, the next to the last number of *Lu*<sup>10</sup> quotes at great length an Italian article on *Œdipe*, with nu-

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<sup>9</sup> To be sure, only two more parts of *The World of the Thibaults* by Roger Martin du Gard appeared after this date — *Summer 1914* and *Epilogue* — but all together they formed four volumes, the last of which did not appear until February 1940.

<sup>10</sup> *Read*, a sort of "review of reviews."

merous quotations. The quotations, likewise translated from the Italian, make my text unrecognizable and, betraying my form, betray my thought at the same time.

14 February

Questions of style. One sins through ignorance, through negligence, or through temerity. Certain writers never call forth a reproach who are yet not among the best. There are few whose syntax, while remaining correct, is able to make itself individual. But any refinement is tiresome that is not demanded by the very movement of the emotion or the thought. There are very few readers capable of understanding at once the legitimacy of that necessity; most of them see in it nothing but affectation. He whose thought is flat feels no need of not expressing it flatly. But nothing is more tiresome than a writer whose pen alone is bold.

It was not so long ago that these questions of style ceased to be of primary importance to me. And if they cease to be so, it is not so much that they seem to me less important; but other questions that were growing in me, that now have reached the age of maturity, have got ahead, dragging the rest after them. So be it!

Express one's thought most succinctly and not most eloquently. But it is when the thought is most alive that my sentence enjoys embracing it, and that it struggles and that one feels it still palpitating under the words. That amplification, which is so often confused with good writing, I am less and less able to endure. . . . What an absurd necessity to write an article or a book! Where three lines suffice, I shall not set down one more.

Documentary film by Dr. Muraz, *Nosologie au Congo et au Cameroun*<sup>11</sup> — shown to a small group at the Pasteur Institute. Frightful image of human suffering. I leave there in a state of moral distress aggravated by the thought that there are very few of those ills that might not have been avoided if only man had used his intelligence and energy to do so. That unfortunate child, thin as a bone and weighing so little that his mother certainly carries him without any trouble, with his feet and hands devoured by jiggers. . . . What stupidity, what negligence! Unfortunate creatures who exist only to suffer, who have not even any idea of a better condition; who can only resign themselves to living as one resigns oneself to dying.

There are painful necessities against which I consider it impious to protest. There are moreover many fewer than ignorance thought there were; man's industry has managed to overcome many, will overcome

<sup>11</sup> *Nosology in the Congo and the Cameroon.*

still others, of those "fatalities" which first seem inevitable. As for the ills that man's industry can remedy, I consider it impious on the contrary to resign oneself to them. After all, this film taught me nothing new. I recognized those populations of the river's edge (Congo) among which we traveled from village to village during the first weeks of our trip without ever meeting a single creature who was not damaged, bruised, tainted, spoiled in some part of his body; so that each one of those unfortunates might think — if indeed those poor creatures were capable of any thought — must have thought that all those blemishes were inherent in human nature, and that, if a healthy man is never found, it is because there cannot be such a thing (just as, weighed down already with the sins of his fathers, no soul, you say, can be imagined without stain). And if one among them spoke of a possible cure, he would be called a *utopian* and would see rise up against him all the sorcerers and all the priests of the district.

Trying to build up the future in imitation of the past — what a reprehensible folly! . . .

My poor Uncle Charles is leaving life step by step. At eighty-four, his first illness will also be his last. He preserves all his memory and his lucidity, all his intelligence.

17 February

I read on page 147 of Péguy's *Clio* (which the *N.R.F.* has just re-issued in an ordinary edition): "It is a wager of *embrocat*ion in one another." I had already noticed this word in the large edition, I recall. It stands for "*imbrication*" probably. Could the mistake be Péguy's own? It is the only one I note in the whole book, of which I reread long passages; a book that must have tried the printer maddeningly — and the mere reader too.

The mind feels as if it is on a merry-go-round; one goes round and round and passes the same spot twenty times; sometimes one hooks a ring while going round. (I wonder if the merry-go-rounds of today still have those little automatic machines which challenged our skill by holding out little metal rings that one was supposed to hook off the rack with a small stick as one went by.)

21 February

Nothing is so insufferable as those people who, asking a service of you, do not help you to help them: a call to help with an illegible signature; or, for instance, this German translator who asks for his manuscript back in a hurry, in a letter that gives as sole address "Charlottenburg." No indication on the manuscript; and the letter I send him to

that inadequate address, as a trial, comes back to me. And how much time wasted looking for some more precise indication in my correspondence of the last few months! . . .

Answering a telephone call, I go to see Paul Valéry at about four o'clock and stay more than two hours talking with him. Those who have never known him cannot imagine the charming graciousness of his eyes, his smile, his voice, his kindliness, the abundant resources of his intelligence, the amusement of his sallies, the sharpness of his views — through so rapid an elocution, often so confused and mumbled that I frequently have to make him repeat many sentences.

A bad cold confines him to his room; he says he is worn out and looks it; his handsome face is lined with anxiety; harassed by the obligations of his fame, tormented by money questions, exasperated by the correspondence that cuts holes in his time (he shows me a letter from a general offering him a 250,000-franc diamond, "a real bargain"), much troubled by the general situation and convinced that the miserable work of political men is leading us to the abyss and all Europe with us. He reads me a declaration by Einstein, distinctly individualistic, to which he subscribes more willingly than to the Soviets. Impossible to build up a single front to stand against the ruinous claims of nationalists. He convinces me of this, and I leave that conversation greatly grieved, for I cannot doubt that he is right. The catastrophe strikes me as almost inevitable. I have come to wish most heartily for the upset of capitalism and everything that lurks in its shadow — abuses, injustices, lies, and monstrosities. And I cannot persuade myself that the Soviets must fatally and necessarily bring about the strangling of everything for which we live. A well-understood communism needs to favor worth-while individuals, to take advantage of all the individual's values, to get the best output from everyone. And well-understood individualism has no reason to be opposed to what would put everything in its place and bring out its value.

*Cuverville, 25 February*

I read with the greatest interest Stalin's new speech, which exactly answers my objections and fears . . . (speech of 23 June 1931); consequently I rally to it with all my heart.

So long as I glimpsed only miserable palliatives to a ruinous state of things, to lying credos, to cowardly intellectual compromises, I could still remain undecided, although all those things seemed to me more and more deplorable. And it appeared to me more and more clear against what my heart and mind rose up and wanted to fight; but I could not be satisfied with mere protest. . . . Now that I know not only *against* what but *for* what — I make up my mind. And I

wonder at the fact that all those who used to reproach me with my "indecision" are all on the other side. They used to throw back at me that letter from Charles-Louis Philippe which I had myself quoted, that sentence which ended the letter: "Be a man: choose," as if they were unwilling to admit that one could make any other "choice" than theirs.

I know in their camp people of such great heart and such good will that, even convinced that they were wrong, it was indescribably painful for me to have to declare myself against them. But how can one fail to declare oneself, rather than see one's silence taken for acquiescence? Indifference, tolerance are now out of place, as soon as the enemy takes advantage of them and one sees prospering what one considers as decidedly bad.

*26 February*

That the ideas of Lenin and Stalin might overcome the resistance the European states are trying to bring against them is beginning to seem possible to those states; and this fills them with terror. But that it might be desirable for those ideas to win out is something they refuse to envisage. There is a great deal of stupidity, a great deal of ignorance, a great deal of stubbornness in their refusal; and also a certain lack of imagination that keeps them from believing that humanity can change, that a society can be built up on different foundations from those they have always known (even though they deplore them), that the future can be anything but a repetition and reproduction of the past.

"Everything begins over again," and "there is nothing new under the sun," they say. And Valentine: "If that famous plan were to succeed, it would take away all my pleasure in living"; as for me, this would happen on the contrary if the plan failed.

*27 February*

To cease advancing aimlessly and to head toward something . . . what an indescribable satisfaction! But was I not won over to the party even before it was formed and formulated its doctrines? And if my wishes too often remained vague, was not this in part because their realization seemed to me too distant? Emotionally, temperamentally, intellectually, I have always been a communist. But I was afraid of my own thought and, in my writings, strove more to hide than to express it. I listened too much to others and gave them more credence than I did myself, as much through sympathy as through lack of self-assurance, through incurable modesty, through fear of "being entirely of my own opinion." Events over yonder have taken this in hand and I am grateful to them for pushing me to it.



The fact that capitalist society sought support in Christianity is a monstrosity for which Christ is not responsible, but rather the clergy. The clergy has so effectively annexed Christ that it seems as if one could not get rid of the clergy today without casting out Christ at the same time.

Some people's faith remains so great that they distinctly see Christ weep over that desertion. How could that desertion fail to strike them as abominable?

*Le Tertre, 5 March*

Between those who hate you because they know you and those who hate you because they do not know you, Roger and I wonder which are preferable.

Try oneself to like and to hate only on good grounds.

What makes one suffer the most is being hated by certain people one likes, who ought to like you and would like you if only they allowed themselves to know you.

Certain young people declare themselves to be our enemies without ever trying to find out whether we do not perhaps like what they like and seek it together with them. Why do they not admit that we might have the same attitude as they toward our past writings; that, without disowning our past work, we might look upon it without indulgence. They think they have to reject the past in order to leap into the future. They do not seem to be aware that it was in order to be closer to them that we accepted being ignored and reviled by those of our generation. By rejecting us they impoverish and betray themselves. What reinforcement they would discover if on the contrary they would deign to recognize as allies those who, while belonging to the past, are opposed to it. For it is absurd to try to condemn, in the name of the future, all the past; and not to recognize, in this case as everywhere else, a filiation, a succession, and that the spirit which drives them, more or less oppressed, has never ceased to exist. In opposition to the satisfied people who settled into the present epoch, in which they prosper and grow fat, there have always been restless spirits tormented by a secret exigence and left unsatisfied by egotistical comfort, who prefer progress to rest. The vision of these young haters of today seems to me limited. Nothing will age more rapidly than their modernism; it is only by thrusting out from a foothold in the past that the present can spring into the future.

In yesterday's *Nouvelles littéraires* a savage attack on Chopin by Suarès, just as absurd and ill-founded as the one on Richardson by Thérive. Such "judgments" without full knowledge of the facts discredit the judge more than they harm the victim. At least Thérive

confessed that he had never read *Clarissa Harlowe*. Suarès lets his ignorance appear unwillingly. It becomes obvious, from reading that article, that all he knows of Chopin is his waltzes, polonaises, and mazurkas (together with the *Marche funèbre*).

What scorn he professed for Goethe in *Voici l'homme!*<sup>12</sup> In the article on Goethe that he contributes today to the *N.R.F.* there is nothing left to show that he has not always admired him.<sup>13</sup> Let us hope that he will live long enough to write, later on, a similar recantation on Chopin. (He owes another to Nietzsche).

Suarès is reduced to picking up, in order to shoot them once more at Chopin, all the bluntest arrows, which his rhetoric feathers anew: tubercular melancholy, virtuosity, worldliness, etc. . . . Some of the darts, moreover, are aimed not so much directly at Chopin as at my pages in the *Revue musicale*.

I feel only too well my incompetence, and I feel it more and more while concerning myself with these political, economic, and financial questions that belong to a field in which I adventure timidly, urged on by an increasing curiosity. But what I feel more and more is the inextricable confusion of all these problems. Such questions are so complicated that the more one becomes involved in them the less one understands; at least this is true of me. Certain specialists in wartime would build up this or that prediction based on their calculations, this or that interpretation of the future—which seemed fatal, but to which events almost always gave the lie.<sup>14</sup> In such cases people talk (for the calculations were exact after all) of “the psychological factor,” of “imponderables,” which the technician was unable, or judged unnecessary, to take into account. But these are precisely my line, my field. I must not try to go beyond them.

8 March

Find an *end* for one's pursuit, one's quest, the agitation of one's mind; i.e., *make an end*. “Devote oneself to a noble cause.” Make up one's mind. To choose. To have found. . . .

Have I not let myself be somewhat influenced by their urgings, their advice? And, through wanting to *serve*, do I not run the risk of forsaking my real usefulness? I feel, I know, that by insisting on taking sides I have everything to lose; and the others even, those I should like to serve, little to gain.

<sup>12</sup> *Behold the Man*, a volume of essays by Suarès.

<sup>13</sup> I have elsewhere related the masterful camouflage of his change of opinion in regard to Dostoyevsky. [A.] See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> I want to make an exception of my Uncle Charles Gide, whose predictions on the contrary always, or almost always, came true. [A.]

Marcel says to me: "A nation that, despite centuries of civilization and culture, has not known how to take precautions against floods and famines has given a proof of its incapacity, or at least of its carelessness, and deserves, if not to disappear, at least to be dominated by some other active, hard-working, industrious nation. . . ." He is thinking of the Chinese and Japanese. But is not the role of those industrious and positive nations, on the contrary, to protect the precious values of the nations inadequately fit for the struggle and ill-equipped? Or shall we have to see disappear with them everything exquisite and irreplaceable that they represented? This is the fatal stifling of everything rare and delicate by the robustly and brutally common. Thus we saw the Incas disappear before the Spanish conquest, then the Maoris and so many others. . . .

What dazzling arguments one finds or invents to prove to others and to oneself, according to the needs of the moment, that one has the right, that it is wise, that it is moral — to limit the number of births, or to procreate and give birth as much as possible; to arm excessively and, with the pretext of defending oneself properly, to attack; to approve Japan, on this occasion, and doubtless to help her tomorrow. . . .

Party newspapers are less dangerous than those like *Le Temps* or *Le Journal des Débats* which appear to be impartial and put on an appearance of not influencing opinion, of letting it take shape freely, but systematically provide it solely with arguments in favor of the thesis it is essential for them to have win out. The information they give is probably not inexact, but it is *selected*. They take care to let pass only what militates in their favor — whether it be a question today of China, Germany, or Russia. So long as they could keep silent in regard to Russia they did so. If now, through fear, they speak of her, this is to spread the alarm; and how could anyone fail to become angry who was familiar with the effort of the U.S.S.R. only through them?

Valmont, 30 March

Some time ago this notebook ceased to be what it ought to be: an intimate confidant.

The perspective of an even partial publication of my *Journal*, as an appendix to the volumes of my *Œuvres complètes*,<sup>15</sup> has distorted its meaning; and also fatigue or laziness, and the dislocation of my life,

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<sup>15</sup> The first extensive publication of the *Journals*, indeed, was made in the fifteen volumes of the *Complete Works*, but there it was divided according to notebooks rather than years and many names of individuals were omitted.

fear of losing what I ought to have put into books or articles which, through some lack of confidence or other, I despaired of writing satisfactorily. Even these lines I am writing without assurance. To be sure, I have already known periods of slackening enthusiasm, and I know that I got over them; but at that time I was young. Is there enough space left ahead of me, henceforth, to spring forth anew? For all the impetus acquired in the past does not seem to me of any help for what I now want to write. And this is above all the reason for my silence. I am in this sanatorium to rest, to take care of myself, to find out what I am still worth and whether or not I can still dare.

6 April

I am recovering a bit of assurance. It is through the loss of all self-confidence that my fatigue becomes apparent at once; that humble, crestfallen, submissive, hunted appearance I take on in such cases. . . .

7 April

Finished without any great interest or pleasure Gladkov's *Cement*.<sup>16</sup> In this young and new literature the slightest literary devices are shocking; they abound here and are of the lowest quality. Conventional psychology, which seems new and bold because Gladkov attributes to his heroine feelings (sexual reactions) that are really masculine.

Important none the less. The human being is so malleable that he rapidly becomes what he is persuaded he already is. I am told that *Cement* had a considerable influence on German youth. Many young women are modeling themselves on the heroine of this novel, who think they recognize themselves in her portrait.

Read with the greatest admiration a volume of Chekhov (in the very ordinary translation by Roche): *Ward No. 6*. The second of the stories, *In the Ravine*, particularly, is excellent even in its slightest details.

*The Rapacious One* by Ehrenburg;<sup>17</sup> a most remarkable book with a real and authentic novelty, extraordinary in intelligence and sureness of presentation. It is the most important and significant production of young Russia that I have read up to now. (I have only reached the middle of this long volume.)

"We all know the romantic motto: do only what others cannot do."<sup>18</sup> The cult of the original. . . . Artème did only what all others did. A

<sup>16</sup> A novel, published in 1926 in Russian, dealing for the first time with post-revolutionary reconstruction.

<sup>17</sup> This novel, entitled in Russian *Rvach* and in French *Rapace*, has apparently not been published in English translation.

<sup>18</sup> Page 193, portrait of Artème Lykov. [A.]

personal idea, which was not that of others, seemed to him useless and unworthy of being expressed. . . ."

No misunderstanding: there may be tremendous joy in feeling oneself to be in complete communion with *others*, communion of thought, emotion, sensation, action; but on condition that those "others" are not cheats. So long as they lie to themselves and defraud, I can feel authentic only when I distinguish myself from them, when I am opposed to them. There is no romanticism in this (at least on my part), but a mere need of truth. How can one fail to be an individualist amid the conventions of a bourgeois society? Here the *Utinam ex vobis unus* becomes shameful.<sup>19</sup>

9 April

The game would be too easy, and how gladly one would play it, with nothing but rascals as opponents! But among them are found also wonderful figures whom I cannot fail to admire. And if at least one could always admire one's partners! But in this case convictions must outweigh sympathies. And what is the good of adding: alas! This is the secret of many a shilly-shallying, ordinarily taken to be intellectual indecision but in reality merely an instance of inadequate resistance to my emotional impulses.

Paris, 18 April

The leaves of the horse-chestnuts take advantage of a moment of inattention to burst forth. Every year it is the same surprise, the same annoyance at having let oneself be taken by surprise. Spring comes stealthily, like the children's Santa Claus. Each time I plan again to lie in wait, to keep a sharper eye on its entrance; but there remains something mysterious, something furtive about it. One stops thinking about it for a moment; one's eyes close or turn away toward a book. . . . One raises one's head: it is there.

It is also probably because the greatest effort of the vegetative thrust takes place at night. See Costantin's observations and reflections on *Tropical Nature*.

Cuverville, 21 April

I have got into the lazy habit of reading while walking, while eating, of not being able to go without reading. All the time I ought to give to meditation, to the imagination, to work, is absorbed by reading. My own thought yields to someone else's, or accompanies it, or fights it. I must teach it the monologue again, or the kind of dialogue in which it does all the talking. How long it is since I have really worked!

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<sup>19</sup> "Would that I had been one of you." Virgil: *Bucolics*, X, 35.

"No," says É.G., "it cannot succeed" (*it* is the Five-Year-Plan) "because if it succeeded, we should be done for." ("We" is not France, but simply big banking interests.) He says this smiling charmingly and quite conscious of the weakness of the argument. I take real pleasure in seeing him again and am ever more sensitive to his qualities of mind and heart. They seem to me greater the less he tries to bring them out, as much through awkwardness as through modesty. Real virtues loathe the ostentatious; I am more and more convinced of this.

This too, this above all, withholds my pen: the thought, of which I keep reminding myself, that many things still dear to us will have neither value nor significance for those of whose coming I have a presentiment and whom my heart beckons. It is to them that I should like to speak, for them that I should like to write; but they will not listen to me. And besides they will do right, having no need, for their part, to hear what I, for my part, should need to tell them. My sympathy means nothing to them and little does it matter to them that I turn toward them. To grieve over this would be folly.

22 April

Do you think that Christ would recognize himself today in a Church? It is in the very name of Christ that we must combat the Church. It is not he who is hateful, but the religion that is established in his name. Not he but the priest came to terms with the powers of this world; it was done in Christ's name, to be sure, but he was betrayed at the same time; and Christ must not be held responsible for that compromise. Christ "renders unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's," to be sure; but by the same token resists Cæsar and surrenders only a garment to him. The social question, in Christ's time, had not been and could not be raised. Had it been, I leave you to decide on what side he would have taken his stand — he who always insisted on living among the oppressed and the poor!

The thing that turns the U.S.S.R. against Him is that he preaches acceptance. Those who subject others take over that doctrine of submission through an abominable abuse. Religion is bad because, by disarming the oppressed, it hands him over to the oppressor. But the oppressor, by taking over the oppressed, betrays Christ and tricks him. By transferring hope to an afterlife, religion puts to sleep and discourages resistance. Whoever understands this can rise up against religion without necessarily giving up Christ. Judas himself did not so much betray him, nor yet so perfidiously, as those who claim to authorize through his words a society that begins by making of those whom his words disarm nothing but dupes.

23 April

I know that naturalists generally reject observations based on domesticated animals. Yet it seems to me that we could often draw some particularly profitable lesson from such observations; for, however deformed they may be, such animals are closer to us than wild animals and, besides, we too are domesticated. It might even be interesting to study the effect of that upbringing and all the deviations of instinct implied by the fact of no longer having to satisfy one's needs. It would be a mistake to believe that the animal is any happier on this account. For in the state of nature, and without man's intervention, any creature incapable of taking care of itself is eliminated; and especially the least resistant. The protection of the puny and sickly, the artificial prolongation of their existence, is due to man; and this allows us to say that man, far from having decreased suffering on this earth, everywhere introduced and supported it, and even with the help of pity.

Our happiness came forth from that long and sorry adventure, but so dilapidated that it inspired pity; it was barely recognizable.

That *state of devotion* in which feelings and thoughts, in which the whole being is oriented and subordinated — I now know it anew as in the time of my youth. Is not my present conviction comparable to *faith*? For a very long time I systematically *deconvincing*<sup>20</sup> myself of any credo that would not resist free inquiry. But it is from that very inquiry that my credo of today is born. There is in it nothing "mystical" (in the sense in which this word is commonly understood), so that this state cannot find help, nor this fervor release, in prayer. Simply, my being stretches out toward a desire, an aim. All my thoughts, even involuntarily, come back to it. In the abominable distress of the present world, new Russia's plan now seems to me salvation. There is nothing that does not persuade me of this!<sup>21</sup> The miserable arguments of its enemies, far from convincing me, make my blood boil. And if my life were necessary to ensure the success of the U.S.S.R., I should give it at once . . . as have done, as will do, so many others, and without distinguishing myself from them.

I write this without passion and in all sincerity, through the great

<sup>20</sup> André Gide uses the neologism "*déconvaincu*" in italics.

<sup>21</sup> "It is the nature of an hypothesis, when once a man has conceived it, that it assimilates everything to itself, as proper nourishment; and, from the very first moment of your begetting it, it generally grows the stronger by everything you see, hear, read, or understand. This is of great use." (Sterne: *Tristram Shandy*, p. 1, ch. xlv.) [A.] The quotation appears in English in the text.

need to leave at least this testimony in case death should come before it is possible for me to declare myself better.

They are too willing to believe that we have let ourselves be led astray. I have already seen this, at the time of the Dreyfus affair. . . . Among the Dreyfusards, according to them, there could only be, in addition to the known rascals and the anti-French antimilitarists, easy marks. Well aware that truth was not on their side, they even went to the point of constructing a defense of falsehood. There were dangerous truths and useful lies. The love of truth was not devoid of some stupidity: one had to distinguish; everything was relative; religion alone could lay claim to absolute truth; but as soon as one descended to the temporal, to history, the event, without any color of its own, took on that of the lighting. The expedient was to be considered true.

Oh, how their eagerness in welcoming them today makes suspect to me the obliging news-bulletins that are given us concerning the failure of the Five-Year Plan, the distress of the U.S.S.R., the "Dniester massacres . . ."! What blindness to inquiry! What lack of verification! What sudden credence granted to the most debatable, most interested evidence! I refuse to see any real critical spirit in any skepticism that applies itself in but one direction. How can one form an opinion on the basis of such suspect data? How can one fail to suspect, behind this molding of opinion, some abominable deceit, since they deign to throw light on only one side of the question?

It sometimes happens, even often, I hope, that the secret cause of a certain act, apparently inexplicable, unconfessable as slanderers are only too willing to believe, is of such a nature that its revelation . . . (to be filled in), through modesty; he would look as if he were showing off. Charming page by Sterne in the chapter of *Tristram Shandy* concerning Yorick's horse:

" . . . choosing rather to bear the contempt of his enemies and the laughter of his friends, than undergo the pain of telling a story which might seem a panegyric upon himself."

I have sometimes happened to suffer dreadfully from certain attacks; but in the long run my enemies have helped me, and perhaps even more than my friends.

*Bayonne, 5 May*

In the train. Extraordinary beauty of the newly awakened greenswards and of the tender foliage; sharper and, as it were, more ravishing than in Normandy. I am again amazed, as when I came back from the Congo; amazement that I then thought I owed to being accustomed to the darker verdure of the tropics; but now I believe the quality of



this peculiar to this countryside. On the grassy slopes, many grayish white stems, probably of asphodels; but not the *racemosa* of the southern moors.

*Tangier, 8 May*

I asked to be awakened at seven o'clock, but at five thirty make up my mind to sleep no more. One would be happy to set out ahead at once, ready to let oneself be caught up with later on by the others or picked up by the coach. . . . But it is a question of taking a train that does not leave until nine thirty and does not stop for passengers on the way. That is the whole story. Thanks to which one can go much farther with the mass than one would have gone as an individualist, even leaving much earlier and walking more briskly.

*On the way to Fez*

*Sala de espera.*<sup>22</sup> What a beautiful language that confuses waiting and hope!

What has been will be. Humanity cannot (without God) get out of its miserable condition, they say. This assertion is a part of their confidence in God.

Everything that is not the cathedral, they claim, is necessarily called upon to become a Tower of Babel. Their hopes desert this life to inhabit future life. Domain of Faith. Uncheckable assertions. Unverifiable Verity. . . .

*Cuerville, 6 June*

I am making a great effort to get back to my book, to draw my *Geneviève* from lethargy. . . . Have I no further creative power in me? Or rather can I no longer become attached to my fiction? It no longer interests me; my mind is constantly leaving it. The novels of others do not hold me any more, and even of Mauriac's I have not been able to read more than fifty pages. . . .<sup>23</sup> How can one still write novels when our old world is crumbling around us, when something unknown is being formulated for which I am waiting, for which I am hoping, and which with all my attention I am observing as it slowly takes shape?

*Darmstadt, June*

No, I do not have to regret the more or less incongruous jokes that stud my *Œdipe*, but rather the program preface in which I seem to attach special importance to them. I had written that preface specifically for the Antwerp public and at the express request of Pitoëff, who

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<sup>22</sup> "Waiting-room" in Spanish.

<sup>23</sup> Probably *Le Nœud de vipères* (*Vipers' Tangle*), which first appeared in 1932.

feared (and was right to fear) that that rather heavy audience would not dare laugh even though it felt like doing so. That preface, which I had forgotten, was reproduced, without my being aware of it, for the Parisian public, for which it was not at all suitable. The jokes in *Cedipe* displeased in general and even rebuffed some of the best disposed. This seemed to them merely a grinding out again of Meilhac or Hervé. I believe that it is to such "easy effects" in great part that my play owed its lack of success (despite the enthusiasm of some).

I have just witnessed the last performance of this same *Cedipe* at Darmstadt. The director, Hartung, had the very ingenious idea of supporting and motivating all the anachronisms of the play (which, consequently, ceased to appear forced) by a semi-ancient, semi-modern setting, mingling the column of a Greek temple with a projection on the backdrop of Notre-Dame de Paris. The actors themselves wore their tragic finery over an outrageously contemporary costume. The scenic illusion, consequently, was non-existent; but my desire not to try to achieve it became at once obvious, and when the chorus was heard to declare: "The action of this drama cannot get under way without . . ." etc., the audience was grateful to me for bringing them into collusion with me and understood that the interest of my play was elsewhere: in the clash of ideas, and that the drama took place on another plane from that of the ancient tragedy.

8 June

I do not think I am deluding myself — or rather: I think I am not deluding myself. I know very well and constantly visualize all the errors that these new proposals still involve, all the lack of adjustment, and repeat to myself that the theory could not be adapted in the same way for all nations and countries. . . . This matters little to me. And I should be willing to hear it said to me: "How beautiful the Soviet state seems when seen from France!" just as it was said: "How beautiful the Republic seemed under the Empire!" But by what lies do you not seek to blacken that state, which we are forbidden to desire? Do you think thereby to make less hateful in my eyes the state in which we are living? From top to bottom of our society I see nothing but iniquity, abuse of power, exploitation of others, deceit. . . . That the state of things in the U.S.S.R. is not yet so satisfactory as some say it to be I can believe, and that it is far from being so; but what it is planning and striving to be, that is what you will not succeed in making me consider any less desirable; nor me less desirous to help it.

Cuvernille, 11 June

I do not know what impression I may make on others; but on myself: utterly stupid. In conversation with X. or Y. my sole preoccupa-

tion is to appear to be following. (Oh, I am speaking of a conversation *in French!*) I remember those conversations which, as a child, I strove to understand, those conversations among "grown-ups." Nothing has changed. But I no longer have the excuse of youth. And if I have to hold up my end, I bring out nothing but squawks.

"Have pity on me and don't listen to me! I have nothing to say to you. And don't think that out of politeness you have to pretend to give importance to what I say. Everything I say and shall say to you is merely absurd. Go on talking among yourselves then, just as if I were not here. I should so much like not to be here. Why did you invite me? I am sleepy!"

13 June

Indeed I do not insist that the tower in which I take refuge should be an ivory tower! But I am no good if I leave it. Glass tower; observatory in which I welcome every ray, every wave; fragile tower in which I feel badly sheltered; do not want to be; vulnerable on all sides; but confident in spite of everything, and my eyes fixed on the east. My desperate waiting, despite everything, takes on the color of hope.

Christ's cross is a part of their armament. Offensive weapon, or merely defensive? He who fights always claims to be attacked. Sophistry of "legitimate defenses."

That enrolling of Christ is, of all the frauds, the most shameful; of all hypocrisies, the most abominable perhaps. "Not peace, but the sword," Christ himself said. That is what they retain of his gospel of peace. They have so effectively linked the idea of religion to the idea of country that it is in the name of God that they arm and mobilize, and that no pacification seems possible except by rejecting simultaneously both of them together, just as the U.S.S.R. is doing at present.

The U.S.S.R. however does not intend to suppress the various states; on the contrary, she supports and protects them and, so doing, reveals her wisdom; but on the one hand by mingling their interests, and on the other by *disaffecting* them, as a chapel is disaffected, she suppresses what might oppose them to one another. Only atheism can pacify the world today.

That will toward atheism on the part of the Soviets, however, is what most arouses against them certain really devout minds. A world without God can only go toward ruin, they think; only toward perdition a humanity without cults, without devotions, without prayers. . . . Why do not these pious souls convince themselves that one can never suppress any but false gods? The need of adoring lives at the center of man's heart.

But religion, our religion, the only one, is a *revealed* religion, say those pious souls. Man can know the truth only through the revelation of which we are the guardians. Any felicity, any harmony achieved without the aid of God seems to them criminal; they refuse to consider it real; they deny it and with all their piety oppose it. They prefer humanity unhappy to seeing it happy without God, without their god.

In this new form they no longer recognize war — and that we are in the midst of it. If the cannons get to booming and the gases to spreading abroad, this will only be *as a confirmation*. War in the embryonic state, dissimulated war; but the starving of millions out of work is worth the machine-guns' harvest. The bourgeois feels safe; for how long? . . .

"Conversion to Communism has been fashionable in Germany for ten years," Curtius tells me.

"Here it is conversion to Catholicism. It is called simply 'conversion,' as if there could not be any other. But in heart as well as mind I have always been a communist; even while remaining a Christian; and this is why I had such trouble separating them from each other, and even more trouble opposing them to each other. I should never have reached this point all alone. It required people and events to educate me. Do not speak of 'conversion' in this case; I have not changed direction; I have always walked forward; I am continuing to do so; the great difference is that for a long time I saw nothing in front of me but space and the projection of my own fervor; at present I am going forward while orienting myself toward something; I know that somewhere my vague desires are being organized and that my dream is on the way to becoming reality."

Howbeit, utterly unfit for politics. Do not therefore ask me to belong to a Party.

14 June

The realization may be imperfect. What matters to me is the play. As to the way it is acted . . . oh! that is another matter, which concerns more competent people.

15 June

"*Determinatio est negatio.*"<sup>24</sup> This formula of Spinoza, furnished me by a note in the fourth volume of Karl Marx's *Capital* (p. 49), could be applied as an additional contribution to my sentence in *Les Nourritures terrestres*:

"Choosing seemed to me not so much selecting, as rejecting what I did not select."

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<sup>24</sup> "Definition is negation."

16 June

"In order to understand the economic phenomena of one's own time, nothing is so valuable as having penetrated, with the rigorous method of history and the serenity provided by a perspective in time, similar phenomena in the past," writes Henri Hauser in his preface to Bonn's book: *The Crisis of Capitalism in America* (p. ix). At the same time I read in an article, moreover rather ordinary, by Sainte-Beuve on Sieyès (*Causeries du Lundi*, Vol. V):

"... in that mass of studies by Sieyès everything is involved . . . yes, everything, except *history*. It indeed was always in disfavor with that absolute mind. . . ."

And Sainte-Beuve quotes a rather long passage from Sieyès, in which this sentence:

"... healthy politics is not the science of *what is*, but of *what must be*."

Sieyès means: of what should be. It seems to me that often the historian, or merely the mind formed too exclusively by contemplation of the past, ever eager to find in bygone times some analogy with the present moment, may resist understanding what the present offers that is unique and not yet experienced. The ever young Clio smiles when she hears them declare that history is "a perpetual repetition" and that there is never "anything new under the sun"; for she keeps many a card up her sleeve; but they do not like surprises and are too inclined to think that what has never yet been could not be.

"The improvident man," says Valéry, "is less crushed and abashed by the catastrophic event than the provident man."

The art of saying things delicately. . . . What care I about appearing witty? The thickness of the great comic artists, of the Cervanteses, Molières, Rabelaises. Their laughter is generosity. He who merely smiles thinks himself superior; he lends himself; the other gives himself.

"I cannot get along with idolaters," said X.

"It is the cult that makes the idol. There is no cult but of false gods. The idol can be recognized by this: that it demands sacrifices. Our world (our society) lives in idolatry; our world is dying of idolatry." And again:

"The best way of not being an idolater is to suppress in oneself the *latry*."

And yet the need of sacrificing himself, immolating himself, torments him, drives X. out of himself. . . .

(Certain risky remarks, in order to disavow them tomorrow, I lend to X. But at the moment that I write them, I think them.)

Saint-Clair, 27 June

Flabbiness, uncertainty of Renan's style (*Drames philosophiques*):

"Ton esprit paraît comme altéré de soif." (p. 127.)

"Vit-on jamais de pareil sapajou?" It seems to me that the "de" is possible only with *sapajous* in the plural. (p. 130.)

"Tout fidèle a droit que je lui serre la main." (p. 131.)

"Qui a tiré un billet comme vous dans la loterie du monde?" (p. 154)<sup>25</sup>

There is much to be said about this style. The influence of Renan on Barrès, whose *Le Jardin de Bérénice*<sup>26</sup> I pick up this morning: just as important probably as that of Chateaubriand. Flaccidity. Sentence without muscles, "macerated in sweetness." — "The religious quality of your heart is exquisite." — "I should lead you to a cloister, there to know a delightful exaltation."

Relaxed, relapsed grace, which is found in Loti, and even in Jules Lemaître. Compared with that Asiaticism, how Dorian I feel!

In all times, in this happily temperate country of France, the two currents have remained distinct. It is especially apparent in sculpture: Clodion, Carpeaux, etc., in contrast to Puget, Rude, Barye.

Importance of words. This morning the rapture of my little Catherine upon learning that Cinderella's slipper was made of *vair* (squirrel fur) and not *verre* (glass) — recalls to me that day in my early childhood when, having learned that certain bows were called "rosettes" (little roses), I scattered a whole flower-bed of them on the carpet in my room, rue de Tournon, and for some time strained my ingenuity to imagine a plot of flowers. — And this, later on, seemed to me so stupid that I kept from recounting it in my Memoirs; but today it strikes me as less stupid than revelatory. (See Rimbaud, and Aragon's *Anicet*.)

### Marseille

The "exteriors" of Pagnol's *Fanny* are being filmed.<sup>27</sup> The requisitioned cops are hardly enough to hold at a distance the horde of idlers from the Old Port; ropes are strung up. Between two series of shots, the movement of trams and autos resumes, and, despite orders, the area in use is invaded by a throng of gapers, who are again driven back only with great difficulty. Among all these people, not the slightest eagerness to help, if only by not getting in the way of others' work. I imagine a properly disciplined crowd policing itself and

<sup>25</sup> In each case the construction is loose and sometimes it is redundant.

<sup>26</sup> *The Garden of Bérénice*, an early ideological novel.

<sup>27</sup> After a great success on the stage following his play *Marius*, Marcel Pagnol's second play of Marseille life, *Fanny*, was also made into a film.

taking pleasure in collaborating in an achievement from which it is eventually to profit. I remain there more than three hours, now with the operators, wandering from group to group, now outside the enclosure; and my eyes seek among the crowd, seek in vain, some face at which to glance with pleasure. The youngest already stigmatized by poverty. Among the older ones, every form of egotism: listlessness, craftiness, meanness, and even cruelty. Whoever claims to love humanity is especially attached, mystically, to what it might be, to what, doubtless, it would be without that monstrous atrophy. Whoever claims to love humanity should attack first the causes of that atrophy. I long professed that the ethical question should outweigh the social question; it no longer appears so to me at present; and even, as it happens in such cases, I no longer very well understand what I meant by this. The individual, even today, interests me more than the mass; but first it is important to have favorable conditions for the mass, in order to allow the healthy individual to be produced. Considerations of this nature seem almost silly when expressed in such summary fashion. They would need dialogue, novel or drama.

Much better impression of the sailing and fishing population of Cassis, where I go to join Roger Martin du Gard. In Marseille, indeed, it is not the masses, but the riffraff.

Of the power of the word. As soon as "sex-appeal" was found, in the shelter of that word every pornography was admitted.

This makes me think of one of Abbé Mugnier's sallies, exquisite in my opinion, but requiring a certain finesse, I believe, to appreciate it. It takes place at some society dinner or other. The Abbé leans toward the elegant lady seated next him:

"Can you tell me, please, what we have just been served?"

"Why, Abbé, it is a roast of beef."

"Ah! God be praised; I feared it might be Chateaubriand."<sup>28</sup>

*Cuerville, 7 July*

René Schwob talks with pious admiration of the latest encyclical, in which the Pope, he says, shows himself so severe toward the capitalist regime. That severity, with which Schwob is satisfied, remains so wrapped up that I do not believe any capitalist power could find in it anything to fear or to be upset about. Probably too many grounds of judgment enter in, which paralyze the impulse of his papal heart and force him to come to terms, to compromise, to give in as with Fascism. It seems to Schwob that the Church could and ought to join

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<sup>28</sup> *Chateaubriand* is the common French name for a porterhouse steak; the Abbé is of course thinking of the writer.

forces with Communism, or at least with what that party would become if it were tempered and softened by that admixture, if it made a place for piety (for Schwob is unwilling to see in the U.S.S.R. anything but a triumph of materialism) and let itself be guided even more by love than by a feeling for justice. . . . A fine role to play, without doubt; but "the die is cast"; the place is taken. One can just as well regret that France did not at once understand the role she too might play, which really would have been *her* role; rather than constantly putting on the brakes and balking.

Indescribable torpor and languor; and this has been going on for weeks and months. No desire to write. The least letter is a burden for me. Read, in the last few months, a number of books, almost all dealing with economic and social questions, with the present crisis. Nevertheless, at the recommendation of Bennett's *Journal*, I made the acquaintance of Gaboriau. *Le Crime d'Orcival*<sup>29</sup> has remarkable parts in it; when one thinks of the time when this book was written, one is obliged to look upon Gaboriau as a precursor, the father of all the present-day detective fiction. I admire particularly the pages in which Lecoq outlines his system to Planet; nothing better has been done since.

Read Bennett's *Journal* (first volume) with a very great interest. To what an extent the social question already concerned him! I like his vigilant generosity, his tireless curiosity, his love of work. But that accountancy he keeps of the number of words he writes every day, without ever speaking of erasures, that American method of working, explain the chief faults of his books, the monotony of his style, the non-contraction of his dialogues, the slowness and lamentably even flow of the narration.

17 July

I have just reread *Pot-Bouille*<sup>30</sup> with admiration. Oh, to be sure, I recognize indeed Zola's shortcomings; but, like those of Balzac or of so many others, they are inseparable from his virtues, and the brutality, the force of his depictions excludes delicacies and subtleties. It is the very excess of *Pot-Bouille* that I like and its perseverance in the filthy. The rendezvous between Octave and Berthe in the maid's room and the soiling of their miserable love under the foul flow of the menials' language; Adèle's clandestine confinement; the family scenes and Mme Josserand's having it out with her daughters (repeated a bit too much, like almost all the effects in this book) are done with a masterly hand and cannot be forgotten. The characters are simplified to excess

<sup>29</sup> *The Mystery of Orcival*.

<sup>30</sup> *Pot-Bouille* has been translated as *Piping Hot*.



but are not mere puppets, and their picturesque language has a truth to life that one very rarely finds in Balzac. I consider Zola's present discredit as a monstrous injustice, which does no great honor to the literary critics of today. There is no more personal nor more representative French novelist.

18 July

What one might have done is confused with what one should have done and by far prevails over what one has done. Let us call it, for greater simplicity: regrets. There is none that I have more trouble getting rid of than this one: circumstances and Em. contributing somewhat, that is to say: the climate and soil of Cuverville being slightly different, or Em. being less attached to that place and willing to settle elsewhere, I should have persevered in my attempts at gardening, which through many disappointments I did not pursue more than three years. And this would have kept me much more at Cuverville. It was only most reluctantly that I resigned myself to giving up, and only when I realized that with the earth and the sky against him no one could succeed. And let no one speak of inconstancy and restlessness. I should have persevered. What I most longed to do was to be able to study plants; with nothing or almost nothing for show, my garden would have been a sort of laboratory, would have recalled those botanical gardens in which each type of plant is enclosed. Horticultural hybridizations would not have concerned me so much as botanical species. I should have wanted to "force" certain ones, through care and selections; insist on getting from them all the perfection and beauty they hold in reserve. Every living matter is plastic.

And I hold that true philanthropy, likewise, ought to be less concerned with saving "what was lost" than with perfecting the human species, which also can and must be improved. What it might be is the thing we should become attached to; that is what we must help it to become, rather than bewailing its miserable withering, and prolonging the existence of what is an insult to life. The healthiest are already all contaminated by sympathy.

19 July

A philosophy that protects my well-being and the mother-of-pearl of my shell; a philosophy for the elaboration of which that shell was necessary and which, without that protection, could not have developed. Does this amount to saying that there might be another? No. Without an isolating shell there would not be any philosophy at all. Nizan could likewise go after the "fine arts." I am reading his *Chiens de garde*<sup>31</sup> with a very keen interest. The book is badly constructed,

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<sup>31</sup> *The Watch-Dogs*, an indictment of bourgeois philosophy.

full of repetitions, and one has several times grasped his meaning while he still keeps on talking. But, such as it is, this book is a sign of the times. *Play* is no longer permitted, even were it that of the intelligence. Why does Nizan not quote Renan's remark that I quoted some time ago: "One cannot think freely unless one is convinced that what one is writing *will be of no consequence*." (I am quoting from memory and perhaps inexactly.) Now Nizan tries to prove to us that any philosophy "is of consequence"; at the risk of being but an empty play of the mind.

I denounced that deficiency of philosophy in my *Immoraliste*, and certain chapters of Nizan's book could have as an epigraph the sentences I attributed to Ménélaque: "Do you know what makes dead letters of poetry today and especially of philosophy? They have become separated from life. . . . Today . . . wisdom functions elsewhere."

Tolstoy's withdrawal as an artist can be explained also by the decline of his creative faculties. If he had still borne in him some new *Anna Karenina*, one can believe that he would have been less concerned with the Doukhobors and would not have spoken ill of art. But he felt his literary career to be finished; his thought was no longer swollen with poetic impulse. Already *Resurrection* marked a notable decline. Who could regret that he did not give us other works of decadence?

If social questions occupy my thought today, this is partly because the creative demon is withdrawing from it. Such questions do not take over the field until the other has already surrendered it. Why try to overrate oneself? and refuse to recognize in me (what appears clear to me in Tolstoy): an undeniable diminution? . . .

Did poetic force decrease in me with my Christian sentiments, as Em. tells me this morning? I do not believe so; but rather with my perplexity. Each of my books up to now has been the exploitation of an uncertainty.

It may be in fact that art and the finest products of thought are flowers that can be achieved only under a forcing-frame (or, in Greece, thanks to slavery) and with considerable manure. To break the forcing-frame would amount to destroying them. Yet it might be that a Soviet state could achieve them without involving the enslavement of a class and its exclusion from the enjoyment of these benefits. This is what I strive to believe and to hope, being no more able to accept the irreparable loss of that flowering that sometimes seems to me the *raison d'être* of humanity (is this "finalism" again?) than the crushing out of a part of suffering humanity, even were this to achieve that flowering.

To tell the truth, I do not fully understand Nizan. Spinoza was a

"proletarian"; and I admire his philosophy only the more for not letting itself be influenced by this. Art, science, and philosophy are worth something only when disinterested. Philosophy does not flatter the bourgeois state, even though it needed that bourgeois state to be produced. Nizan is careful not to drag art into his indictment, or poetry. He is well aware that he would be less enthusiastically followed if he were obliged to prefer Béranger to Baudelaire or Verlaine. The scoffers would no longer be on his side, nor those who are delighted to see him make fun of Bergson or Brunschvicg because ratiocination bores them. Does it amount to condemning Mallarmé or Einstein to say that they are accessible to but a few rare people? And moreover Mallarmé himself was as far as possible from being a "*rentier*." And I have no need of not being myself a *rentier* to judge a social system that creates and protects *rentiers*, to judge it as most lamentable.

When I had begun this new notebook, I had promised myself, however, not to deal with such questions here. The result of this was simply that I spent several weeks without writing anything. These questions preoccupy me almost exclusively; I constantly return to them and cannot turn my thought away from them. Yes, really, I think of almost nothing else. Everything I see, everything I read brings me back to them, or else it does not interest me. The war was less obsessing: forced to accept everything passively, one tried to think of it the least possible; one repressed one's indignations and revolts; duty consisted, we then thought, in keeping silent. But did they not take sufficient advantage of the fact that they knew us to be *devoted to duty*? This is indeed why we feel today that our duty, today, is on the contrary to speak out. If we kept silent we know that you would make of us, by our very silence, your accomplices. Just as, in the Congo, if I had kept silent about the abuses I denounced, I should have, by my silence, become an accomplice of those abuses.

"Our own honor is involved in such adventures, and those rascals' deed was so cowardly that it would have amounted to taking part in it if one had not opposed it." (Molière: *Don Juan*, Act III, scene iii.)

22 July

At first I rather came down a peg as I began reading *Au Bonheur des Dames*<sup>32</sup> and told myself that I was merely going to skim through it. But even this novel, without being one of Zola's most notable ones, still seems to me remarkable. I am above all amazed at the rightness of tone of all his characters' remarks. Certain dialogues are really excellent. (I am thinking particularly of the scene, so difficult to

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<sup>32</sup> *At the Sign of Ladies' Delights*, a novel by Émile Zola that gets its name from a department store that is the subject of the story.

achieve, of Mouret, Denise, and Mme Desforges when Mme Desforges, in order to humiliate Denise in her lover's presence, made her come to adjust a coat at the fitting.) I am well aware that each of his creatures has nothing very rare about him; but this is the way Zola wants them, and he is quite right to want them thus. Everything here contributes to and harmonizes with his rather summary æsthetic: plot, setting, characters, style, devices even — and I find many fewer here than in many other of his novels, even the best.

I finish *Au Bonheur des Dames*. The last chapter much less good; a more noticeable inferiority since the preceding one was one of the best (bankruptcy and burial of small business). The linen exhibit forms a rather too easy apotheosis, with tiresome insistences and repetitions in the enumerations.

Through a need to bathe myself clean, I open Whitman before going to sleep. (*By Blue Ontario's Shore*) . . .

. . . *O days of the future I believe in you — I isolate myself for your sake*

. . . *Lead the present with friendly hand toward the future.*

23 July

Finished the first volume of Houtin's autobiography, which teaches me much without pleasing me much. What naïveté he had to believe in the possible union of the Church and free criticism (historical or other)! His very account shows sufficiently the slope on which the mind, once having entered upon it, cannot stop itself, and how right the Church was to condemn his first writings. It is on his side that the lack of intelligence lies, or, if you prefer, the naïveté.

What a wild, restless look he has in his photograph! — like Abbé Turmel, besides. That look in which you, Catholics, see hell, you gave it to them; it is the look of hunted men; the mere pursuit of truth becomes, on the part of one whom the Church has marked, a *defiance*. The very word indicates it: one cannot liberate oneself without defiance from an original confidence.

They will strive to suppress everything of which they do not at once see the use. Until their own leisure finally achieved allows them to enjoy it in their turn, how could they appreciate what it required so much "fecund laziness" and so much "scented leisure" to achieve? *Primum vivere*. And I greatly fear, I confess, that the initial anxiety for vegetables may first exile from our gardens all the flowers. Consequently I admire nothing so much in the U.S.S.R. as the organization of leisure, of education, of culture. Probably the great need of cadres urged them to it; but also the feeling that work, though it becomes a

necessity for every man, is nevertheless not the end of man, and that every man must have his share of that leisure which, in our time, is still the privilege of but a few.

*Cuverville, 29 July*

Nothing to note. Dreadful confusion after reading the Trotskyite manifestoes that Pierre Naville lent me. But, however well founded certain criticisms may seem to me, it strikes me that nothing can be more prejudicial than divisions within the party.

7 August

I am leaving for Berlin without desires and without joy, already eager to come back, to be back.

Yesterday at Vogel's, Ehrenburg, to bring out the profound difference of the new generation in the U.S.S.R.:

"When those of my generation were recommended not to read a book, they rushed to that book and devoured it at once. Every prohibition of that sort was to them a recommendation. Quite on the contrary, as for the young people who are between twenty and twenty-five today, it is enough to tell them that a book is bad, for them not to try, not to be willing even, to open it. But the change in this case has taken place not only among the young readers, but also among those who advise them, who immediately preceded them, in those who tell the young: read this, do not read that. The young would not listen to them unless, having changed themselves, they deserved to be heeded by the young."

*Berlin, 10 August*

I finish *L'Argent*.<sup>33</sup> Forced to admit that this book is vulnerable to criticism. It is worth nothing, does not even exist, save as a scaffold. All that can be said for it is that it is cleverly put together. No chapter seems to be written for itself, but rather simply to fill the space left for it in the outline.

Characters, emotion, dialogues, everything remains sketchy.

*La Bête humaine* <sup>34</sup> seems to me one of Zola's best novels (much better than my recollection of it.) Many excellent scenes. His psychology is thin only when his theories of heredity come to the rescue.

Much less good *La Conquête de Plassans*,<sup>35</sup> which I also want to reread; but the book soon falls from my hands. Everything is studied,

<sup>33</sup> Zola's novel, *Money*.

<sup>34</sup> *The Human Beast*.

<sup>35</sup> *The Conquest of Plassans*.

foreseen, without surprise; I find in it no sustenance any more for the mind than for the heart or senses.

But *Germinal*, which I am reading for the third (or fourth) time, strikes me as more admirable than ever.

28 August

Back to Cuverville after a new sojourn in Berlin (the third this summer).

What has happened? The time came when, considering the little that was left me to live, I told myself: not a day to waste . . . and since then I have done nothing worth while.

Hold one's own at least. . . . But no, as soon as one ceases to be tensed toward progress, one falls back. . . .

September

Rather keep silent than complain. . . .

Berlin, 17 October

I give up the other notebook, of unlucky hue, in which I managed to write nothing but asinities and repetitions of what I brought out in October in the *N.R.F.*<sup>36</sup> (In psychology, the ass is a ruminant.) The last words I wrote in it: "rather silence than complaint," date from the month of . . . ? — Quite willingly I should have considered them as definitive "last words." I have not often wished to die (two or three times only) but rather to be already dead — for greater simplicity. I used to compare myself to Icarus, lost in the labyrinth from which so many mystics think they are able to free themselves only by a leap toward heaven. If my journal is not more full of wailing, this is because I take pleasure in writing only in a state of felicity. That resolution, already made in my youth, to let my work reflect nothing but joy (or rather an encouragement to living) may lead to believe, most deceptively, that I am accessible to nothing else. Just like the sundial that marks "only the happy hours." But my depression of late was due, as often, chiefly to fatigue. Harassed on all sides, I fled Paris to recover myself.

23 October

One cannot, however, succeed in making me believe in God by persuading me that it is healthier to believe in him! or more comfortable.

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<sup>36</sup> In the October 1932 issue of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* appeared extracts from this journal covering the period 8 January 1932 through 14 June 1932 and entitled "*Pages de journal*."

It is, on the contrary, precisely in the scorn of comfort that I become stronger and assert myself. And this is what makes me throw out from under my head Montaigne's "soft and smooth pillow."<sup>37</sup> It is perhaps also for the comfort it would take away from me that I wish for Communism; as it is also certainly for that reason that they fear it.

24

Is it in punishment for these last lines that I had to spend half of last night on an uncomfortable armchair in the vestibule of the pension where I am staying? I had happened to come in rather early, counting on a long night to make up for the last few days and particularly for the last night. . . . Key forgotten; impossible to open the door of my room. . . . No interest and no pleasure in relating this. . . .

According to Roger, nine out of ten of the young men who indulge in prostitution here are in no wise homosexual. They do it moreover without repugnance but solely for the money, which allows them on the other hand to keep a mistress, with whom they are seen everywhere throughout the day. Roger claims to have enjoyed the confidences of a great number of them, in the various establishments where they can be found in the evening, and, since he does not go there to "partake," he boasts of obtaining more sincere confidences than the people they try to flatter; personal confidences, and also about one another. And as I question somewhat the exactness of those statistics, he obstinately maintains his figure: nine out of ten. "Yes, I am convinced that but one out of ten among them is yielding to a natural inclination." This would seem to prove at least, if one takes this information to be exact, that even constant practice does not succeed in overcoming a spontaneous taste (as it has often been claimed), does not manage to influence true tendencies. "Drive out nature and it comes back on the run."<sup>38</sup>

But I believe also that imperative, irresistible tastes, whether homo- or hetero-sexual, are rather rare and that a great number of people have a mobile taste, *ad libitum*, vacillating, without conviction, without vocation, ready to yield to the occasion, to fashion, to opinion, and indiscriminately seeking sensual pleasure, the only thing that is certain.

Verify whether or not the journal notes concerning the trip to Germany are in the right place. I must have gone to Germany twice that year:

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<sup>37</sup> Montaigne spoke of his "*mol et doux oreiller*" of doubt.

<sup>38</sup> "*Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop*" is an oft quoted line from the comedy *Le Glorieux*, by Destouches, Act III, scene v.

- 1) in winter with Maurice Denis;
- 2) in summer (lecture at Weimar).<sup>39</sup>

Péguy was, to be sure, too honest simply to incorporate that quotation he made from my *Isabelle* into his own text; <sup>40</sup> but also too proud to give the reference or even to set it in quotation marks; he was satisfied to set these few words in italics, judging that this was doing me enough honor.

Of the error of thinking that between lovers or friends he is most in love who makes the most concessions to the other.

The strongest natures sometimes do not fear to let themselves be marked by certain influences against which less well-tempered natures would balk; the latter remain on the alert and, for fear of losing it, think they have constantly to protect their wavering and indecisive personality. It was always he who gave in (in the X. couple); at most he amused himself occasionally by saying to her: "Do not take advantage of your weakness."

*Berlin, 29 November*

By great chance I encounter again yesterday evening the very young sailor from Hamburg and his even younger companion, of whom, since my last stay in Berlin, I feared to have lost sight forever. Saül Colin, with whom I was walking that night when we met them, having just reached Berlin, claimed not to believe any of their tales. I believe he was deceived in constantly fearing to let himself be deceived by them. Not only nothing they said was proved false later on; but furthermore I was able to verify their veracity by questioning them separately by turns.

I do not much believe in the cogency of Roger M. du. G.'s assertions. His poll is tendentious; he is looking for confirmation of something of which he is "convinced" in advance. I have too often seen his psychological intuition at fault. He lacks true scientific spirit; he has that of an excellent graduate of the *École des Chartes*; <sup>41</sup> but not that of a naturalist. Almost every young man he questions yields to the desire to reveal himself such as his questioner wants him to be; moreover,

<sup>39</sup> It was in January 1907 that he went to Berlin with Maurice Denis, but the *Journals* contain no mention of a lecture in Weimar that year.

<sup>40</sup> "And at last the house weighed anchor for the passage through the night." [A.] See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 329.

<sup>41</sup> Before becoming a novelist, Roger Martin du Gard attended that famous school for paleographers and librarians and wrote a thesis on the ruins of the Norman Abbey of Jumièges.



almost every one of them is very eager not to seem to be impotent. There would be much to say about all this. Never yet has any inquiry of this type been seriously conducted and with a real pursuit of truth. Indulgence or fear almost always influences the replies; each one tries to dodge.

13 December

Solicited by the A.E.A.R.,<sup>42</sup> which wants to count me among its recruits, I reply: No, dear comrades. The only result of such an engagement would be immediately to keep me from ever writing anything again. I have declared as loud and clear as I could my sympathy (and the word is weak) for the U.S.S.R. and for all it represents in our eyes, in our hearts, despite all the imperfections that are still held up to us. I believe that my co-operation (and in my case very precisely) can be of more real advantage to your (to our) cause if I give it freely and am known *not* to be enrolled. Writing henceforth according to the "principles" of a "charter" (I am using the expressions of your circular), this would make whatever I might write henceforth lose all real value; or, more exactly, it would spell sterility for me. Do not see, in what I am saying here, any desire for personal protection and safety. Already I have proved more than once that I did not fear to "compromise" myself when I judged it necessary. But those who read me today and upon whom I can exercise (even without exactly wishing to) some influence would not even listen to me any more as soon as they could believe that I am thinking and writing under orders.

Cuverville, Tuesday, 27 December

Arrived yesterday evening. Finished in the train Léopold Chauveau's *Monsieur Lyonnet*. Very keen interest and pleasure. It is impossible to know children better; the words he attributes to them are very faithful (and, besides, all his dialogues). Excellent illustration for the formation of childish myths.

"Well then, do you insist that we have always told the truth? . . ."

The character of the little girl, Miotte, is remarkably well observed.

I see especially the convenience for the author of that broken-up presentation; but I do not like that he should skip the most difficult: the transition from one to another of all these slight stages.

No matter! A remarkable book and as tormenting as one could wish.

Then I plunge into *Le Grand Meaulnes*, which I had not yet read.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Doubtless L'Alliance Européenne des Amis de la Russie, which grouped sympathizers of the U.S.S.R.

<sup>43</sup> *Big Meaulnes*, the well-known novel of a child's adventure, by Alain-Fournier, was first published in 1913.

Reread likewise Marivaux's *L'Épreuve*,<sup>44</sup> of which Malraux had spoken to me and which I gradually recognized, for the play was given at a children's matinee at the Join-Lamberts' — where naturally Octave took the role of Lucidor, leaving me that of Master Blaise, the peasant.

29 December

Read with the keenest interest the beginning of Benda's *Discours à la nation européenne*<sup>45</sup> in the proofs of the next issue of the *N.R.F.*

I should not be surprised if Benda, a contemporary of Proust and Valéry who like them is revealed late in life, were to become one of our chief leaders. On rereading those pages immediately afterward to Em., I regret that the writing is sometimes a bit flabby.

René Schwob's book on me<sup>46</sup> could have as an epigraph this sentence that I read this evening in Bossuet:

"It is impossible for him to teach well since he does not teach in the Church." (*Œuvres oratoires*, Vol. III, p. 211, ed. Lebarç.)

I told René Schwob that he reminded me of the doctors of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.<sup>47</sup> He cannot admit that I am in a state of health and I owe it to him to be ill. He takes for blackness everything that is not saturated with certain rays.

"We shall certainly have to modify our opinions on love and its manifestations."

This is what I read, p. 96, in the (often excellent) book by Stekel on *Conditions of Nervous Anxiety*. At times a certain prejudice and a need of fitting into categories (a prejudice from which I do not know that any psychoanalyst escapes), as it appears in the commentary on *The Story of Florrie* that Havelock Ellis adds as an appendix to that story, which I finish reading yesterday evening. I applaud the conclusions he draws from it and cannot keep from copying these few lines:

"I hope to have made it clear that 'this brilliant therapeutic result' must not be regarded as the re-establishing of ordinary 'normality.'" And, further on: "The therapeutic result, here as almost always in this domain, is not achieved by forcing the personality to adopt a foreign way of living (for that is what would not be 'normal' for it, though in

<sup>44</sup> *The Test*, a delicate comedy of love.

<sup>45</sup> *Speech to the European Nation*.

<sup>46</sup> *Le Vrai Drame d'André Gide* (*The Real Drama of André Gide*) by René Schwob appeared in late 1932.

<sup>47</sup> The chief character in Molière's comedy of this name.

conformity with the average). . . . One must not modify it artificially, but *harmonize it in accordance with its own nature.*"

"But what then," you will say, "is this 'therapeutic result'; and on what are you congratulating yourself?"

"On this, which ought to be enough: 'She is no longer obsessed or tortured. She is happy and at peace.' " Formerly, incapable of work or *employment*, for she could think of nothing else. But those who refuse to understand always imagine that one is looking for (exclusively) satisfactions. No, but rather liberation; the possibility of going beyond, permission on the contrary to think of something else. And it is just when one refuses to grant importance to the sexual question that it may take on too much. It ceased to harass me from the day when I made up my mind to look it squarely in the face, really to pay attention to it. *Corydon*, far from being evidence of an obsession (as Schwob sees it), is the token of a release. And who can tell the number of those whom that little book has, likewise, *released*?

That art and literature have nothing to do with social questions and can only, if they venture into them, go astray, I remain almost convinced. And this is partly why I have been silent since such questions have become uppermost in my mind.

We are just beginning to emerge from the mystical stage; but that the "fine arts" belong to it I am ready to believe and that they need that climate to prosper. I prefer not to write anything rather than to bend my art to utilitarian ends. To convince myself that they must be uppermost today is tantamount to condemning myself to silence.

After *Le Grand Meaulnes*, read *Le Bal du Comte d'Orgel*, which I had never read either.<sup>1</sup>

Extraordinary assurance of this book; almost excessive. It has about it something of the wager and of acrobatics. The achievement is almost perfect (despite incomprehensible stylistic weaknesses for some fifteen pages toward the middle of the book). Far superior to all the other productions of Radiguet and to *Le Grand Meaulnes*, of which the interest becomes diluted; which spreads out over too great a number of pages and too long a space of time; somewhat uncertain in outline, with the most charming giving out at the end of the first hundred pages. The rest of the book chases after that first virginal emotion, trying in vain to recapture it. . . . I am well aware that this is the very subject of the book; but it is also its shortcoming, so that it was perhaps not possible to bring it off better.

An unrecapturable freshness. . . .

The farmer's children were not content to tie a pan to the tail of this unfortunate stray dog; through a refinement of cruelty, they twisted around his leg the end of a long barbed wire, in which the dog gets tangled up and hurts himself. Em., warned of this, went around the avenue to find him; she took care to take our bitch along, counting on her flair to find the poor hunted animal, which had gone to take refuge in a shed, between the buggies and the agricultural implements. Em. calls a farm-hand to help her free the dog from his shackles. She wants to give him some of the soup she was taking to the farm dogs, as she does every evening. But the miserable victim, panting and out of his wits, took flight as soon as he was freed, most likely to go and die a bit farther off; anywhere whatever, but out of sight of men.

Em. was not able to sleep last night (nor I either, moreover), too angered and grieved by the imbecile cruelty of those children. I can explain it to myself only by their idleness (they are having a few days' holiday) and their lack of imagination. Imagination alone, it seems to me, can bring out true pity. No hope that the parents will inflict on those children the severe spanking they deserve and one would like to see them get.

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<sup>1</sup> *Big Meaulnes* was Alain-Fournier's only novel, for he was killed at the front in 1914. *The Count's Ball* was Raymond Radiguet's second novel, published after his death at the age of twenty.

. . . And as a suffering is endured more easily when one knows that it is soon to end. . . .

Such an *Œdipe*, and sublime, and in the grand style, and pure of line, and stripped of all dross, might probably have laid claim to some success, but it would no longer have offered any interest for me. In the jokes, trivialities, and incongruities of mine there is, as it were, a constant need of warning the public: you have Sophocles' play and I am not posing as a rival; I am leaving him the pathos; but here is what Sophocles could not have seen and understood, though it lay in his subject, and what I understand — not because I am more intelligent but because I belong to another epoch; and I propose to let you see the other side of the scenery, were it to be an obstacle to your emotion, for it is not your emotion that matters to me and that I am trying to evoke: it is to your intelligence that I am addressing myself. I intend, not to make you shudder or weep, but to make you reflect.

3 January

Got up a bit before daylight, after a rather good night; a very strong wind is driving the low clouds; a bluish-gray sky; not a ray, not a smile from sky to earth; trees stripped; tremendous flights of daws or crows are wheeling above the avenue and the farmyard. Wonderful *unanimity* of all the elements of the landscape, I was about to say: of the symphony. *In its way*, I can imagine nothing more beautiful. One would have said that this picture was painted by an artist who had an extraordinarily subtle and keen sense of the *appropriate*. And nothing in excess. A bit later the tones became more lively; the symphony became more complicated; the charm was broken. It ceased to be anything but a banal winter landscape.

4 January

To accuse a conscientious objector<sup>2</sup> of cowardice is absurd. There is always less courage in behaving according to pattern than in distinguishing oneself from a group, when that very distinction, far from protecting you, exposes you.

I am reading this morning Bertrand Russell's declarations, already old, reproduced in a little brochure of *Les Libres Propos*. That idea of non-resistance to an invasion had already greatly tormented me during the war. If I never formulated it, this is because that thought immediately met opposition from this one: that such non-resistance could be realized only through a unanimous consent of all the citizens of a country; that those in power who took the initiative would be immediately put out of office; that a revolution would follow almost necessarily,

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<sup>2</sup> The expression "conscientious objector" appears in English.

giving the invader a more than adequate pretext for using his force, which would consequently seem repressive, so that the non-resistant part of the country would have to make common cause with the enemy, and this would put it in an unacceptable posture. I should fear that, practically, the only result would be a frightful mess. That non-resistance we dream of, which is desirable in spite of everything, which would render useless recourse to arms and the use of violence, I do not think it possible except after a long education, the progressive devaluation of certain "currencies," the puncturing of false gods. I believe that Communism alone can hope to achieve it, proposing more general interests than national interests, an "ideal" superior to that of the nation, enrolling the courage and devotion of various countries in a common cause.

Cardinal Dubois accepts an invitation to dinner at Rothschild's.

"Mouton-Rothschild" is served and a lackey half fills the Cardinal's glass, when the latter stops him and fills it up with water.

"What, Your Grace, are you baptizing my wine!"

"Don't be alarmed, Baron, I am cutting it."

Apparently apocryphal remark, but amusing all the same, especially if it implies the complete presence of mind of both interlocutors. Much less funny as soon as one imagines it to be invented; resulting quite naturally from the realization of two picturesque ways of describing the dilution of wine, and from the reflection that one of the two images can apply equally well to the Jewish practice and the other to the Christian practice. Put into the mouth of interlocutors, it takes on life and becomes amusing; you hear the voices, see the subtle smiles. . . . Throws light on the device for fabricating witty theatrical dialogue.

Lefebvre des Noëttes brings out very well the importance of the utilization of natural (and animal) forces, which alone put an end to slavery.<sup>3</sup> The use of the machine is today to permit a similar liberation and of a much greater number of men. Whence the "cult" that the U.S.S.R. pays to the machine, which ceases to seem ridiculous when one removes from this word the mystical sense generally attributed to it.

Montherlant is probably right when he says (and he says it magnificently) that youth rejects the idea of a peace that would offer no sustenance for its appetite for glory and its need of enthusiasm. But

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Lefebvre des Noëttes, a French army officer, born in 1856, revolutionized sociological history with his studies in the "history of slavery," as he called his detailed analyses of the history of the harness and the rudder.

what Communism proposes to us today is a way of fighting war which demands of us more courage and permits of more heroism than war itself. In truth war would call for nothing but a blind submission.

That future war which we are forced to glimpse, abject in every way, will no longer have a place for heroism; so that that last allure-ment, that prestige it still holds for the noblest among our young men, will be taken from it.

New titles of nobility, new forms of holiness, of sacrifice, of heroism (and not at all as you say: new facilities), this is what we need. This is ignored only because of an absurd misunderstanding, a profound misappreciation of human nature and its mysterious appetites. It is you on the contrary who offer it stagnation in the inherited comfort that your effort is solely concerned with preserving.<sup>4</sup>

It seems to me very unjust to reproach the U.S.S.R. with being anxious only about material interests; but she is utterly right to take care of them *first*. And by ensuring education to all her people, by favoring and filling their leisure hours, she certainly shows that her aims do not stop there.

But in order to rebuild anew, one has to start from the ground itself.

Many are those who still confuse mysticism and spirituality and who believe that man can but crawl if religion does not support him; who believe that religion alone can keep man from crawling.

The first Christians likewise believed that the coming of the kingdom of God was very close, to such a point that some among them were able to hope that they would not die before having seen it. Then this hope had to be put further into the future. . . .

Remarkable, the article by Berdyayev: "Truth and Falsehood of Communism," which I read in the first number of *Esprit*. I read it with the keenest satisfaction and relief. Very good likewise the account of a trip in the U.S.S.R. by Jean Sylveire, of which this number gives but the beginning. "To be continued" most certainly!

That the experience of the whole U.S.S.R. is of incalculable scope is what makes me wish most heartily that it will succeed and that events will allow it to be perfected. Only thus can it have a great educative value for other nations. But I must confess to myself my whole thought: that experience had to be attempted in Russia; Russia has probably more to gain (and in any case less to lose) than we. I even

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\* Already in March 1910 I wrote: "Barrès! Barrès! Why do you not understand that what we need is not comfort (and I mean: intellectual comfort), it is *heroism*." [A.]

doubt that the social state she is trying to realize is desirable for our nation, unless profoundly modified. People talk of that difficulty of "skipping rungs in the ladder." It seems to me on the contrary that in this case our past gets in our way and that a still amorphous nation is much more capable of adapting itself to new forms than a nation that is already formed. But that our capitalist system is worthy of being condemned, that any collusion of Christianity with it is shameful, does this mean that Communism, in order to be applicable to France, will have to be exactly modeled on Bolshevism and will not have to be adjusted? And what else are they doing in Russia itself but making a progressive adjustment? And this by no means signifies an arrangement and compromises with the enemy forces.

Of all this, many Catholics, many convinced Christians (I know some admirable ones), are not aware, cannot be aware. This is because they live in the ecstatic dream of a Catholicism such as it ought to be, such as you would like it to be, such as it is not.

"And are you not doing likewise in regard to Communism?"

"But there is this great difference between us, that you realize your religion entirely in yourself, whereas I cannot after all realize Communism all alone."

Catholicism can thus reach perfection in certain souls. How could they hold it responsible for the abuses it permits elsewhere?

So it took two letters from correspondents (which it was unbecoming not to publish) to make *Les Libres Propos* decide to mention my *Pages de Journal*.<sup>5</sup> As it seems to me that the prolonged silence of that little review, and a most estimable one, is made up in great part of great admiration for my uncle (so that for them Gide is Charles Gide and there must not be any other Gide than he), and as my uncle had, even more than I, to suffer from an even more unjust silence, it is not of this silence itself that I shall complain. The thing against which I find it hard not to protest is the peremptory way they had, at the time of the publication of my *Voyage au Congo*, of establishing the fact that before bumping up against a few sorry exactions in French Equatorial Africa I had never managed to interest myself in men, solely absorbed as I was in the contemplation of myself. So that presumably it required that contact with the oppressed black race to tear me away from my "narcissism" and that there was less reason for being grateful to me for finally concerning myself with "social problems" than for holding it against me for not being earlier interested in them.

If I had kept a journal during my first trip to Algeria as I did daily

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<sup>5</sup> *Extracts from the Journals*, published in 1932.



in the Congo, most likely I should have spoken of the business of the Gafsa phosphates, which I was then able to follow closely, of the withdrawal of the White Fathers after the death of Cardinal Lavigerie, and especially of the arrival of barrels of absinthe to break down the natives, and of the expropriation of the Arabs by the device of the Cazenave bank according to a monstrous method that I would probably have exposed. . . .

(And, on the other hand, if I had not kept that journal in French Equatorial Africa, I should most likely have brought back from my trip in the Congo only a few "landscapes" for a new *Amyntas*.) The feeling of my incompetence long kept me from speaking of what was not *my line*. It took the war to bring me to doubt of the value of "competencies," to convince myself that a specialist can be wrong like anyone else and that I had just as much right as anyone else, and even the duty, to speak.

*Paris, 6 January*

The truth is that I cannot resign myself to staying away from Em., nor dissociate my brain from my heart. . . . This is the secret of all my indecisions; my very reticences are the most passionate. But no, there is nothing to be done about it, nothing to be tried; "no man can serve two masters" — and "the man whose heart is divided is inconstant in all his ways. . . ."

Every time I see her again I recognize anew that I have never really loved anyone but her; and even, at times, it seems to me that I love her more than ever. And it is because it takes me away from her that every step forward is so painful to me. I can no longer think without cruelty. A "condition of anxiety" sufficient to explain many sleepless nights. . . .

Probably it is because I feel her suffer from it that each attack on Christ still hurts me so painfully. At times I come to wonder if it is not also because, without wanting to admit this to myself, without even knowing it or being exactly aware of it, I never completely ceased believing in him. Yes, believing in Him, in his immanent omnipresence, in that aggravation of his cross through our fault, etc. . . .

*9 January*

The thread of my thought constantly broken by telephone calls, visits, petty daily occupations. Yesterday I let myself be taken to Saint-Germain. Very pleasant lunch at Vogel's. Martin-Chauffier accompanies Marc and me. I go over with him the prefatory notes to Volume III of the *Œuvres complètes*. After lunch Vogel, Marc, and I draw up the material conditions of the trip to Siberia and those of the moving-picture mission. Did not get back until five o'clock. Finished correct-

ing the proofs that I am to give back to Malraux today. I must go out again to dinner. Dreadful night. I have again forgotten how to sleep. The last few nights I have hardly gone to sleep before three o'clock and am awakened as early as six thirty, not so much by sounds as by the trembling of the house. Brain again rather active; I hesitated to get up and note certain reflections that seemed to me important and that I feared to be unable to recapture later on. Since continuous work is impossible, I should like at least to write down rapidly here, just as they come to me, the thoughts that are tormenting me; without care to put them in order and without fear of contradicting myself. But first this, to be added to what I began to write the day before yesterday.

Yes, it is sentimental reasons that make me strive to find some ground for reconciliation, for possible agreement, between Christianity and Communism. But I see only too well, alas, how and why capitalism and Catholicism are bound up together and the great advantage that capitalism can find in a religion that teaches a man whom society strikes on the right cheek to hold out the left, which benumbs the oppressed and soothes him with hopes of an afterlife, transfers rewards to a mystical plane, and lets the oppressor enjoy a triumph which it persuades the oppressed to be but illusion. How could the man who knows that Christ said: "happy those that weep" fail to take advantage of Catholicism, and how could "those that weep" not accept submission if they know that "the last shall be first"? Theirs is the kingdom of God; the possessors leave it to them if it is well understood that those that weep will leave to the possessors the kingdom of this earth. Everything therefore is for the best and no one has anything to complain about. Christ remains on the side of the poor, to be sure; the rich leave him on their hands. The poor almost thank them for this. They know that they have "the better part." And probably Christ did not want this. In his time the social question could not be raised. Replying to a specious question, he said: "Render unto Caesar. . . ." So much has been rendered unto Cæsar that there is nothing left but for him. But the poor know that everything they give up here below will be "returned to them an hundred fold." One cannot imagine a better investment!

And the rich still find a way of conciliating Christ (or of reconciling themselves with him) by making a point of being "charitable." For, after all, they have kindness — which will allow them, they hope, while keeping all their advantages "here below," not to allow themselves to be dispossessed of all hope of still being, after death, on the right side.

*16 January*

Too little time, the last few days, for writing in this notebook, when it just happens that I should have had the most to write in it. Great

joy at having slept fairly well the last two nights, when I made up my mind to sleep above my library. And immediately I take on a new interest in life and desire to work. Alas, seriously upset by bores. The only excuse for those people who come to ask advice of you is that they are unable to suspect the disturbance they cause. Nothing seems to me more fruitless today than "advice." I no longer have any confidence in the advice I now consequently give only with reluctance.

I recall having disapproved in the past of the "flat milk" of one of Valéry's most beautiful poems.<sup>6</sup> The epithet seemed to me too intentional and to attract attention unduly. Today it seems to me marvelous and I should regret it very much if he had changed it. It required all of Valéry's genius to invent it. To deserve it, there was needed that so peculiar appearance of milk in the bowl, its opaqueness, its dullness, its whiteness, etc. — an epithet that was not suitable to any other liquid could only be excellent. And yet it has happened to Valéry to follow some of my "recommendations" as it has happened to me to listen to those of Drouin, of Schlumberger, of Martin du Gard; but never without having meditated over them at length and only when I felt that they went in my direction. It is very difficult to advise a young man when one does not yet know where he wants to go and when, most often, he does not yet know very well himself.

I find an old article by Souday, which appeared in *Le Temps*, regarding a certain definition of verse (given by Valéry during a lecture at the Vieux-Colombier and which I had happened to set down in one of my "detached pages" published in the *N.R.F.*). According to that definition, what characterizes verse and differentiates it from prose is that one cannot displace or change a single word. I maintain that it is utterly, obviously true that one cannot change or displace a single word in a beautiful line of verse, but that this is equally true of beautiful prose. My sentences (oh! not these or many others in this journal) satisfy an exigence just as rigorous (though often more hidden), just as imperative as that of the strictest prosody.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Of course! . . . And that is the most abominable aspect of it. One of the worst sufferings of poverty, for one who is not incapable of love, is having always to receive and never being able to give.

Even that word of Christ (reported by Paul, *Acts*, xx, 35) is ex-

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<sup>6</sup> *Palme* opens with these lines:

*De sa grâce redoutable  
Voilant à peine l'éclat,  
Un ange met sur ma table  
Le pain tendre, le lait plat. . . .*

exploited by capitalism, which reserves for the rich alone the beautiful and noble joys of charity. And which, moreover, will win them paradise.

22 January

I read a bad page by an author who is otherwise very ordinary. Why does he write that? The reply is simple: the need of money is besetting him; he has obligations to meet and must furnish copy.

We too (Valéry and I) must live by our pens. It is essential to know whether or not quality can take the place of quantity. It is monstrously unjust to reproach Valéry for getting the most and the best out of a writing that he took great time to distill and which represents as many hours of work as twenty or fifty articles by X or Y who dictates them while shaving in the morning.

Even though artistic value cannot be measured, I do not think that it completely escapes the Marxist theory and that it is absurd to evaluate, in a particularly concentrated work, the distillation of a great number of hours of effort.

8 February

Too busy of late to keep this notebook up to date. Trip to Wiesbaden, where I find Stravinsky, with whom I am to work for Ida Rubinstein.<sup>7</sup> Complete accord.

Even if there were but one inexact quotation in a whole book, you can be certain that that is the one which will be at a premium and will be reproduced everywhere. I had warned Pierre-Quint, pointing out to him a tiresome slip: he makes me say: "I am never what I think I am," whereas I had written quite differently and with much more sense: "I am never *but* what I think I am."

"Do you want to bet," I added, "that that is the sentence among all others which the critics will remember?" And this evening, in fact, I see that mistake reproduced in an article by Thérive. It is the only quotation he makes; it is wrong.

It seems to me that an alert, perspicacious critic could have, should have, run down the mistake. One would have to know me very little to accept as mine such a flat sentence. But all the rest of the article shows how little Thérive knows me.

The sky above Europe and the entire world is so heavy with storm; hearts are so full of hatred — that occasionally one comes to think that

<sup>7</sup> On *Perséphone*, an opera in three tableaux presented at the Théâtre de l'Opéra, Paris, by Mme Ida Rubinstein on 30 April 1934 and published the same year. The music was by Igor Stravinsky, the choreography by Kurt Jooss, and the staging by Ida Rubinstein and Jacques Copeau.

nothing but a conflict of classes could forestall today the mortal conflict of nations.

I am making a great effort to sober my thought with a little wisdom, but what an error it is to believe that wisdom is always on the side of moderation! And those who say: "rather war than revolution," how can they fail to understand that the revolution would inevitably follow the war, so that, by trying to avoid one, we should have both?

If I had been able to bring to completion at once that *Geneviève* which was to be a continuation of my *École des femmes* and in which I proposed to give the floor to the new generation, I should doubtless have exhausted (purged myself of) a great many ratiocinations that have chosen me for domicile and that I found myself forced, as it were, to assume. I was not able to attribute them to a "hero" as I had previously done with the Nietzschean ones in my *Immoraliste* and the Christian ones in my *Porte étroite* and remained caught for the first time (and with the *first person*). Assuming them myself, I could not push them to the extreme, to the point of absurdity, as I should have been able to do in a novel, which at one and the same time would have set them forth, would have examined and criticized them, and would finally have delivered me of them. The trap, badly set (which I did not have the strength to set properly), suddenly closed on me.

*Marseille, 9 March*

It is as a result of a poetic deficiency that I was led to give to the public what should have constituted the matter of the novel I had begun writing. (Haven't I already explained myself on this point somewhere?) That *Geneviève*, a continuation of *L'École des femmes*—adverse circumstances, the poor state of my health, etc., forced me to leave it unfinished. Am I to think "it's a pity" . . . or "so much the better"?

*11 March*

Consider pessimists as personal enemies. And they are the very ones, those distributors of gloom, who cling most to life. For one of the most admirable excesses of the love of life leads the lover to risk that life, to give it up, out of exuberance.

And what a shameful preference of the dream for the reality, through impotence and giving up the effort to make reality more beautiful!

And shame especially on the mollicoddles!

Struggle against the contagion of melancholy.

12 March

The notion of perfection and the notion of a long life are closely linked. . . .

How could he fail to wish for a long life who knows that the new truth he is bringing to the world will not be so quickly understood, or even heard? He knows also that solely the perfection of its form can permit and promise his skiff to stay afloat for a rather long passage; and that it is important to preserve from rotting the products that are not for immediate consumption.

V. establishes very judiciously the three stages of Montaigne's evolution. It is certain that a too hasty reading of the *Essais* may confuse one's vision; and often the changes, the retouchings, and the additions are as instructive as the text itself.<sup>8</sup> That Montaigne modified his ethical system goes without saying, and that the one belonging to the end of his life is often opposed to the early one. But if V. considers Montaigne such a wise man, how can he dare to declare that after a certain age he goes astray? And why will he not allow me to think that the end of his career is also its summit?

Those who refuse to believe in progress are no more willing to believe that ideas grow old and die and that yesterday's auxiliary becomes tomorrow's impediment. X reasons on this subject like a frog that had forgotten ever having been a tadpole.

That wonderful popular expression, among so many others, and heavy with meaning: "*Tu te fais des idées.*"<sup>9</sup>

14 March

Those who (René Schwob in particular) see my writings encumbered with the sexual obsession seem to me as absurd as those who formerly claimed those writings to be frigid. Sensuality remains, in their mind as in their flesh, so closely linked to the object that awakens it that, the object once changed, they fail to recognize it. Then, warned by me, they saw that sensuality everywhere, after having seen it nowhere. It influenced my will, they said, distorted my thought, rotted my prose; each of my books was impregnated with it. . . . How many stupidities they wrote on this subject.

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<sup>8</sup> The reference is doubtless to Pierre Villey, who stressed, in his studies of Montaigne, the growth of Montaigne's thought represented in the edition of 1580, the second edition of 1588, and the later manuscript emendations published after Montaigne's death.

<sup>9</sup> Literally "you are making ideas for yourself," this expression means: "You are imagining things."

5 April

What would be Barrès's attitude in regard to Hitler? He would approve him, I believe. For, after all, Hitlerism is a successful Boulangerism.<sup>10</sup> What made it prove abortive in France? Circumstances or men? Would the French people have let themselves be led into such excesses? Doubtless Hitlerism was favored by unemployment, poverty, and that constant irritation which France, alas, seems to have taken it upon herself to provide.

7 April

Since Germany seems bent upon getting rid of her brains, could not France offer to take in that "gray matter" that our neighbors seem to scorn?

Could not the French government, above and beyond politics, offer Einstein, forced into exile by Germany, a chair in the Collège de France, as was done in the past for Mickiewicz? A laboratory and the means of continuing his research. . . . In order to create a sort of foreign annex to this Collège, which would perpetuate an ancient tradition of receptivity of which France would have reason to be proud, it would probably not be hard to gather together the necessary funds. Shall we have enough sense to make this gesture before another country gets ahead of us? And this time what a fine reason we should have for being glad to be French!

I speak of this to Malraux, who promises to speak of it to Monzie.<sup>11</sup>

Marseille

Kept in Paris to see Stravinsky again, I finally was able to leave Saturday evening. Arrived the morning of the 9th. Roger M. du G. comes to pick me up at eleven o'clock. Substantial conversation, as always. I tell him of the idea of the Collège de France. He insists that I follow it up, earnestly urging me to write and publish in *Marianne*<sup>12</sup> an open letter to Daladier or to Monzie. . . .

But is it not impertinent to assume that they have not thought of this themselves?

Roquebrune, 10 April

Quite rested already by the joy of being back here, despite the last two sleepless nights. A letter from Roger renews his request. I cannot succeed in getting up enough steam to dare writing. If only I

<sup>10</sup> General Boulanger, named Minister of War by Clemenceau in 1886, later became a Royalist and threatened the Republic in 1888-9 as a popular dictator who might have seized power. Barrès was among his many admirers.

<sup>11</sup> Anatole de Monzie was then Minister of Education.

<sup>12</sup> *Marianne* was a weekly newspaper of literary news published by the Éditions Gallimard.

could see Valéry. It would be up to him to do it. He at least would be listened to.

During the trip from Marseille to Menton I reread *Vieille France*<sup>13</sup> at one sitting. How could I have been so wrong at first? It is true that numerous changes have brought this book to perfection; now it is excellent. Great joy.

The moment is doubtless ill chosen for manifestations (declarations) of this type. And, even though I have an utterly different point of view from his, Fabre-Luce is right. Not that I believe at all that an agreement with Hitler is possible or desirable (there are too many implications and misunderstandings in it), but that, faced with Hitlerism, it is at present unwise to invite France's forces of resistance to relax. Voicing the claims of the extreme Left too soon, however legitimate they may be, amounts to inciting Hitler to come and crush them here, as he has just done in Germany.

I am not saying that the whole contribution of the past is of no use to me; but rather that that contribution might have been different. And I constantly recognize all I owe to those of my country, of my race, who brought me into being; what I owe likewise to that joint inheritance which takes no account either of races or of countries. But I tell myself, and keep repeating to myself, that the heritage of the past might have been different. I cannot imagine as any different the instruments of conquest over nature: the ax, the hoe, the sickle, or, later on, the rudder; but rather all those works of the intelligence according to which our judgment and taste have been formed. In the most complicated of machines I can admire the turning to account of laws that my intelligence can understand and subjugate to its own self-proposed ends, yet never modify. So that solely in their imperfection can those machines remain different.

The work of art infinitely varied.

And all the rest is fantasy. Future humanity will not consider it seemly to pay any attention to it, and Homer will be as if he had never sung. Child's play, all of it! We are entering a serious epoch.

*Et qui sait si les fleurs nouvelles que je rêve . . .*<sup>14</sup>

But dreaming is now out of the question.

<sup>13</sup> First published in 1933, *Old France*, by Roger Martin du Gard, is a particularly unflattering portrait of a small town as seen by the postman on his daily rounds.

<sup>14</sup> This is line 9 of Baudelaire's sonnet "*L'Ennemi*" ("The Enemy") in *Les Fleurs du mal*. After describing his youth as a darkling storm that ravaged the fruit in his garden, the poet states that he has now reached his intellectual autumn and must work to rebuild the flooded earth —



"It would be fine to grow old<sup>15</sup> if we advanced only toward improvement: it is a drunkard's gait, staggering, dizzy, amorphous."

I wonder if the last word, *informe*, does not signify in Montaigne's mind, rather "without beauty" than "without form"; better justified thus: *in-formosus*, the negation *in-* being more suitable to an epithet than to a substantive (I cannot find any other example where it is so linked). Littré gives no example of that acceptance. But the word in the example from Boileau that he quotes: "Tragedy, *informe* and coarse at its birth . . ." allows one to glimpse the passage that might have taken place from one meaning to the other. I am well aware that there is the Latin *informis*, from which the French comes directly; but it just happens that this word, when Virgil or Horace uses it, means rather "without beauty" than "without contour," and Montaigne, raised on those authors, remembers this.

Read aloud to Em. some articles by Sainte-Beuve on Saint-Just, Sieyès, Joseph de Maistre — very disappointing. And even I do not finish out the reading of the last one, endless (not the one from *Les Causeries du lundi*, but the long study in *Les Portraits littéraires*).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, I had already read it all. On the other hand, I picked up Rousseau again (the two discourses for the Dijon Academy, the letter to the Protestant minister Vernes, the letter to the Archbishop of Paris, etc.) — of what extraordinary value as a lesson! Tried to write a few pages on this subject; but they were not worth much. I am constantly stopped by the question: "what is the good of it?" which, for some time now, has made me hesitate before the effort that I fear not being able to bring to fruition. It is not a question of age (though my fatigue tries to convince me of this). I am not quite sure that the very strict diet that good Dr. Sourdel has imposed upon me does not contribute greatly to deflating me, and even more than the malady itself. In any case, during this stay at Cuverville my state of tension was far from being sufficient to allow me to get back to work. Useless efforts.

But I plunge with the greatest advantage into the de Man (*Au delà du Marxisme*<sup>17</sup>), from which I reread long passages immediately

*And will the new flowers I see in dream  
Find in this soil washed bare and clean  
The strength to grow and the mystic food?*

*O grief and pain! Time consumes our life,  
And, gnawing our heart with teeth like knife,  
The Enemy fattens on our lost blood!*

<sup>15</sup> Montaigne wrote: "Il ferait bel estre vieil." [A.] This means: "It would be fine to be old."

<sup>16</sup> Sainte-Beuve's best-known criticism is found in the *Monday Chats*, the *New Mondays*, and the *Literary Portraits*.

<sup>17</sup> *Beyond Marxism*, by Henri de Man.

afterward to Em. Since *Les Frères ennemis*<sup>18</sup> by Count Sforza, it is the book that has interested me most. I have the greatest difficulty, to-day, getting interested in fiction. Yet I have reread from beginning to end *La Condition humaine*.<sup>19</sup> This book, which in serial form seemed to me excessively involved, disheartening because of its richness, and almost incomprehensible because of its complexity . . . seems to me as I reread it altogether, utterly clear, ordered in its confusion, admirably intelligent, and, despite that (I mean: despite the intelligence), deeply embedded in life, involved, and panting with a sometimes unbearable anguish.

Melancholy at not feeling up to writing about this book, and to contribute to its success, the article it deserves.

11 April

This evening *L'Éclaireur de Nice* informs us that Einstein accepts the chair that Spain has just offered him at Madrid. The event is announced in large capitals; *L'Éclaireur* grasps its importance then.

I cannot admit that those qualified to make that offer in the name of France did not think of it. . . . What reasons did they have for not doing so? . . . I am seeking, and for myself too, excuses. . . .

As soon as the news of Einstein's exile appeared, I should have put forth the suggestion in *Marianne* or the *N.R.F.* Still better: instead of barking with the others at that public meeting, have that suggestion to the French government voted by acclamation by the large audience. How I blame myself for not having thought of this then!

Every good Frenchman should be inconsolable that France did not have the sense to make this fine gesture, which would have been so natural to her and in which we should all have recognized ourselves.

14 April

Is it a result of Malraux's intervention with Monzie? Yesterday's *Le Temps* announces Monzie's interpellation in the Chamber regarding the offering of a chair to Einstein. Bravo! But how can this be reconciled with Madrid's offer, which Einstein is already said to be accepting?

Back to Paris the 12th. Roland Malraux, come to meet me at the station, extends Mme de Fels's invitation to lunch that same day with Valéry Larbaud and Léger, neither of whom I have seen in some

<sup>18</sup> This book, published in France in 1933, was entitled in English *Europe and Europeans*.

<sup>19</sup> *Man's Fate*, by André Malraux.

time.<sup>20</sup> It is too late for me to go. From the restaurant near the station, where I lunch, I telephone that I shall try to come for coffee. Very happy to see Valéry Larbaud again, but am unable to show how much I like him (precisely because I do so much) save in the most awkward fashion. I feel more and more embarrassed and artificial in "society," where the desire to seem natural deprives me of everything natural and of all wit. Very pleasing group nevertheless and very interesting and substantial conversation on Léger's part.

I have on me an article by P. Herbart on Freinet, which I am asked to place in *Marianne*, one by Pascal on Victor Serge, which I go to take to Vogel, together with another by Le Boulanger on the repression of Communism in Indo-China.

Le Boulanger had sought me out before I left for Cuverville. Atrocious situation. How can I help him? A few bills would be but a lamentably temporary help. What he wants is work. He has the look of hunted animals. Has lost his voice as a result of a tubercular laryngitis, particularly hard to treat since he is also diabetic. His wife is about to undergo a serious operation; his little daughter has broken her thigh, etc. . . .

How can I recover that serenity of mind indispensable to work? I really believe I have lost it forever.

. . . That wretched creature in a doorway on the corner of the boulevard Saint-Germain and the boulevard Raspail. His coat pinned together with a safety-pin to hide the lack of shirt. A vacant stare. . . . I saw him again, two hours later, as I left the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, in the same place, in exactly the same pose, an image of utter despair. I tried to speak to him, but he seemed not to understand anything; he almost dropped the bill I slipped into his hand. Back at rue Vaneau, I could think of nothing else. . . .

That state of joy in which I intended to maintain myself, that joy has ceased to be anything but a very dim sputtering flame which I feel to be on the point of going out. I conceive a hatred, not so much for the rich who live in a condition of thoughtlessness, but rather for everything I am aware of possessing over and above. What brings me to the Communists is not theories, which I only half understand and am not concerned with, it is merely knowing that among them there are some for whom this state of things is *intolérable*. But there are such among Christians likewise. Why, how, do they happen to be the exception among Christians? It is, alas, only too easy to answer this question with another question: how can one consider intolerable what one believes to be willed by God?

<sup>20</sup> Alexis Saint-Léger Léger, the diplomat, is referred to elsewhere under his pen-name of St.-J. Perse. See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 291.

Gallimard gives me the latest issue of *Les Marges*, in which Suarès vents his spleen. Does he at least feel relieved after having vomited these insults? This article alludes to a preceding one I did not read, which Gallimard is to get for me. Claudel likewise had got it into his head, not so long ago, that there was a coalition against him. And, naturally, just like Suarès, he considered me responsible. Both of them blinded by pride and what Suarès calls "the feeling of true greatness." The best and only reply that the *N.R.F.* can make to their insults is to accept their copy none the less and just as cordially as before. This is what Paulhan does before having consulted me, knowing full well my sentiments and knowing that I can only approve him.

Indignation, to be sure; but not hatred. I am and shall remain incapable of hating. Even at the worst moment of the war. And doubtless this is a great weakness, or becomes so when it is a question of acting; but nothing can be done about it. To be sure, I once wrote: "Families, I hate you";<sup>21</sup> but here it is a matter of institutions, not of persons; it is not the same thing at all. Thus it is that one can hate war, an oppressive regime, etc. But as soon as persons are involved, it would require, for hating, more incomprehension than I have; and not being interested in the how and why, where can be found the explanation, if not the justification, of the worst things?

But am I not mistaken? What force hatred can assume when it is born, not of blindness, but of comprehension itself! When one can truthfully say: so long as I did not know him well, I did not know he was so hateful. For is it not very fanciful to suppose that getting deeper into any person allows one to discover in him anything whatever permitting you to like him?

The servant in the little restaurant on the quay, where I dined yesterday evening, said to me:

"Isn't the gentleman making a mistake?"

And, indeed, without paying much attention to the change she was giving me, it was one of the new ten-franc pieces that I was taking for two francs and leaving her as a tip. I should not have noticed it if she had not warned me; and nothing forced her to do so — except that sense of honesty that always seems to me surprising and admirable.

Great joy at finding excellent Jammes's poem for the death of Mme de Noailles. I should like to tell him so . . . but what would be the sense of a letter from me? It would simply lead to one from him, to which I should not know how to reply. . . . I at least need to write it here.

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<sup>21</sup> In *Les Nourritures terrestres* (*The Fruits of the Earth*).

That young Moslem, a pupil of Massignon, who came to talk with me one morning and whom I sent to Marcel de Coppet; with tears and sobs in his voice he told me of his profound conviction: Islam alone was in possession of the truth that could bring peace to the world, solve social problems, reconcile the most irreconcilable antagonisms of nations. . . . Berdyayev reserves this role for Greek Orthodoxy. Likewise the Catholic and the Jew, each for his own religion. It is in the name of God that men will fight. And how could it be otherwise, since each religion lays claim to a monopoly on revealed truth? For it is not a matter of ethics here, but of *revelation*. Thus it is that religions divide men, though each one claims to unite them. Each one claims to be the sole possessor of *Truth*. Reason is common to all men and is opposed to religion, to religions.

*Cuverville, 20 May*

Reread aloud Balzac's *L'Interdiction*<sup>22</sup> (which, moreover, I remembered rather well) with unflagging interest and often with admiration. I should like to have enough memory not to forget an amazing praise of the Chinese, a people "among whom *revelations* are impossible" (page 292) — and a most remarkable passage on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (page 286), which would be worth quoting.<sup>23</sup>

Excellent speech by Hitler in the Reichstag. If Hitlerism had never made itself known otherwise, it would be more than merely acceptable. But it remains to be seen where the real face ends and the grimace begins.

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<sup>22</sup> *The Commission in Lunacy.*

<sup>23</sup> The passage, which Gide does not quote, is spoken by the Marquis d'Espard: "The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was decreed," he went on. "You are no doubt aware, monsieur, that this was an opportunity for many favorites to make their fortunes. Louis XIV bestowed on the magnates about his court the confiscated lands of those Protestant families who did not take the prescribed steps for the sale of their property. Some persons in high favor went "Protestant-hunting," as the phrase was. I have ascertained beyond a doubt that the fortune enjoyed to this day by two ducal families is derived from lands seized from hapless merchants.

"I will not attempt to explain to you, a man of law, all the maneuvers employed to entrap the refugees who had large fortunes to carry away. It is enough to say that the lands of Nègrepelisse, comprising twenty-two churches and rights over the town, and those of Gravenges which had formerly belonged to us, were at that time in the hands of a Protestant family. My grandfather recovered them by gift from Louis XIV. This gift was effected by documents hallmarked by atrocious iniquity." (Translated by Clara Bell.)

25 May

I receive a visit from a young Communist of twenty-six, who looks only twenty; he is bringing me an article in which, if you take his word for it, he has forever shut up Benda; the latter, recognizing that he would have no reply to this, has presumably opposed the inclusion of this article in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. The above-mentioned young man counts on me to go over his head. The interest of the party is involved in the acceptance of that article. It is not he (whose name I have forgotten) who is involved, but the cause, and I am betraying the party if I do not force Paulhan's hand. As I tell him that I have never wanted to make use of authority at the *N.R.F.*, that I have always left Paulhan complete freedom of choice, that, in short, I refuse to intervene, he declares while raising his voice that he is "stunned," profoundly disappointed, that after my declarations he had a right to expect me to support him and, since that's the way it is, he is ready to relate as loud as he can my falling away, my desertion. I tell him that this is blackmail; at once he exclaims: "To be sure; but legitimate blackmail. . . ." He talks louder and louder, gets excited, seizes me by the arm; eventually I put a chair between us. . . . "Is that really your last word?" he asks in his most threatening tone. And since I reply that I have nothing to add: "It's a pity! I am sorry for you, but you've asked for it. You will live to regret this."

This conversation amused me too much for me not to push it beyond reasonable limits, so that, toward the end, there were repetitions without making any headway. I especially enjoyed the confusion that X insisted on maintaining between the fate of his article and the success of the cause; besides, he seemed rather sincerely convinced and, consequently, I rather liked him in spite of everything. (Several times he protested "that it was not a question of his article," to which I replied "that on the contrary it was a question solely of his article.") — Somewhat concentrated, the dialogue might be excellent. Young X played rather well his role of zealot — after all, rather easy like all the roles of "stock" characters.

26 May

In the libel charge he has brought against *Gringoire*,<sup>24</sup> Vogel has won his case. But *Gringoire* handles it in such a way as to make its public think just the contrary. The accusation of being an "agent of the Soviets," not having been held to be injurious, is reiterated.

The editor-in-chief, not having been considered as responsible for the defamatory article, boasts of his innocence (taking good care to hide the fact that the writer of the article is condemned); expresses

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<sup>24</sup> A weekly newspaper.

surprise that Vogel does not appeal — “this constitutes legal publication” — without saying that Vogel has no reason to do so since he won his case. And *Gringoire*, obliged to publish the judgment of the XIIth Chamber, inserts it in such a place and such a way that its public can read it only with the greatest difficulty and hence remains convinced of Vogel’s guilt. It is impossible to imagine a more casual thwarting of justice.

Some to whom I speak of this assure me that it is always this way and “that there is no occasion to get angry.”

*Cuverville, 2 June*

“They did not return home till nine o’clock, *when* they had a light supper.”<sup>25</sup> The “when,” just as it stands, is untranslatable into French, which can express that temporal relation only by a periphrasis. The use of “lorsque” is impossible in this case; this would amount to forcing its meaning. “*Ils ne rentrèrent pas avant neuf heures, pour se faire servir un léger souper*,” is inexact, since they did not return *for* that purpose. “*Et sitôt rentrés prirent un léger souper*” scamps the difficulty. It is exactly: “*heure à laquelle ils prirent*,” etc., but “*à neuf heures, heure à laquelle*” is inelegant, barely correct. No way of getting out of it.

Many simple and current little expressions are properly untranslatable from one language to another; and not only from English to French, but conversely. Just take our banal “*au revoir*.”

Just before leaving for Cuverville, endured a sermon on Vauban by Father Gillet at Saint-Louis des Invalides. What was I doing there? Oh, I simply went to hear, with Stravinsky and Ida Rubinstein, a children’s chorale that we are thinking of borrowing for the third tableau of *Perséphone*. Father Gillet, very dignified in the handsome Dominican habit, very nobly glorified in Vauban the soldier and the Christian. I thought the whole sermon would end without even an allusion to the *Dîme Royale*; he spoke of it only at the very end and as if reluctantly; and not at all, it goes without saying, of the *Mémoire pour le rétablissement de l’Édit de Nantes*.<sup>26</sup> “In the name of Christ, let us arm France until we make her incapable of being attacked” might be the summary of that panegyric, characteristic of that noble French Hitlerism which is going to lead us nobly to war.

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<sup>25</sup> Oscar Wilde: *The Canterville Ghost*. [A.] The quotation is given in English.

<sup>26</sup> After distinguishing himself as a military leader and engineer, Vauban lost favor with Louis XIV by proposing a uniform tax, the Royal Tithe, and the re-establishment of the Edict of Nantes, by which Henri IV in 1598 granted liberty to Protestants. Louis XIV had revoked this edict in 1685, thus exiling many Protestants.

Cuverville, 6 June

I read in *Le Temps* of today:

"The European Anti-Fascist Congress met yesterday at the Salle Pleyel with the participation of the foreign delegates. The representatives for France are: MM. Marcel Cachin, Careille, Racamond, Cazaubon, Professor Prenant, André Gide." I am eager to point out here that my acceptance of that congress was taken from me by surprise. My categorical *refusal* having "come in too late," I received a letter of apology (to be found in the papers I left in Paris), to which I in turn replied that, since the error was committed, there would be still greater trouble trying to correct it, for I should then seem to be *withdrawing* from a congress to which I merely did not want to belong. I add that not one of the names of those mentioned in the letter (requesting my support) as future members of the committee figures here.

I have received, since the Hitler crisis has been acute in Germany, a dozen solicitations from different groups whose objects, as it would seem from their declarations, are the same, so that it is appropriate to wish them to get together and not let their efforts be scattered. Having the possibility of declaring myself when I want to and in the way that seems suitable to me, I systematically refuse to countersign any declaration whatever of which I have not written the text. There is in this no desire whatever to distinguish myself; and I very well understand how important it is, in any occasion of this sort, to group together, to unite one's efforts; but I do not believe I have yet encountered a single proclamation of this type of which I can completely approve and which did not distort my thought on some point or other.

At last I have been able to read Suarès's interview that appeared in *Les Marges* before the explanatory article. He says in it that he does not detest Chopin, but that he was annoyed to hear me compare him to Goethe! To what a degree passion can blind him. . . . Goethe is not brought up once in my *Notes sur Chopin*.<sup>27</sup> But what does this matter? It is essential to roar and play the wounded lion. And Suarès starts out from that absurd parallel between Goethe and Chopin in order to call me "the flies' Goethe." . . .

*Facit indignatio stultitiam*.<sup>28</sup>

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Bernard will say in *La Nouvelle École des femmes*:<sup>29</sup>

"I thank God for having endowed me with a great capacity for

<sup>27</sup> Which appeared in *La Revue musicale* in December 1931.

<sup>28</sup> "Anger produces stupidity," a maxim modeled on Juvenal's "*facit indignatio versum*" of the *Satires*, I, 79.

<sup>29</sup> *Geneviève*, as it was entitled on publication in 1939, which continues *L'École des femmes* and *Robert*.



scorn. It is against Him to begin with that I turn that scorn. This is my way of adoring him. If I were God (may God forbid!), I should not give a damn for their genuflections. I should consider as the best praise and the most sweet-smelling incense insubordination and revolt. God has no use for bowed heads. There is in submission something contemptible and *ignoble*.

"As if making it to rain equally on the just and the unjust were just!"

But there is God and god, as there is love and loves; and nothing is more irritating than these misunderstandings due solely to the fact that by a similar word one connotes, according to the case, far too different species.

That involuntary God, who makes it to rain indifferently on all — the only real god we note anew each day on awaking — has no connection with the fierce Jehovah you mention (thank God!), any more than with the god of love who will be incarnated in Christ. . . .

Nothing is more likely to distort the mind than that reconciliation one tries to establish here between irreconcilable elements — distort it irremediably.

Amazing intellectual acrobatics in order to get to the point of believing that only one's own weakness keeps one from reconciling God's prescience with man's freedom, the X with the M, etc.

Interpretations. — Everything is distorted. One starts out from Truth; one leaves it behind. It is a question of convicting others of error.

"The proof that you are wrong is that . . ."

There is no more frightful jail. — The number of imprisoned priests.

The cycle: nerve center

periphery

vital organs

(let us add also the endocrine glands and a number of intermediaries that have been more or less smoked out). It is a question of finding out who began. Vicious circle. According to the school one incriminates this or that. Bad functioning of the liver; due to a bad functioning of the nerve centers; due to the deficient nature of the blood; due to the bad functioning of the skin. And so on. And however you tackle the circular course, it will always be "obliquely."

All interested opinions are suspect to me. I like to be able to think freely and begin to fear being taken in as soon as some advantage

comes to me from the opinion I profess. It is as if I were accepting a bribe.

By mood and temperament I am not at all revolutionary. Furthermore, I personally have every reason to be pleased with the state of things. But, you see, what bothers me is just being in a position to be pleased with it; telling myself that if you were not born on the right side, you would perhaps not think the same; having to think: if you are a conservative, it is your advantages that you want to conserve and hand on.

*Vittel, June*

Lamentable hideousness of this petty-bourgeois crowd. Not a single creature whose existence one would want to prolong. Cannot manage to convince myself that I am suffering from anything that people come to treat here.

One must first convince oneself of this: whatever one thinks and says that does not go in their direction, that is not in close conformity with what they know in advance (and by tradition) to be the Truth, will in advance be considered an error. This is what Bossuet expresses admirably thus: "It is impossible for him to teach well, since he does not teach in the Church." (*Œuvres oratoires*, III, p. 211.)

If therefore we are not satisfied with this, we shall be called quibblers. The only thing to do is to override this, as the sciences long ago did. However definitively it was condemned to immobility by the Church, the earth has no less continued to turn, and man's brain to strain its ingenuity toward betterment.

I have already said so: I know nothing about politics. If they interest me, they do so as a Balzac novel does, with their passions, their pettinesses, their lies, their compromises. Everything is debased, and even the noblest causes, as soon as politics get mixed up with it and take it in hand. People get killed so that their blood may make utopia come down from heaven onto earth. I learn that certain "magnates" are in the wings, fake this drama, and look upon those martyrs as puppets whose strings *they* know how to hold. Then I am told that without strings the puppet would not have stirred. And they think they are justifying strings in this way! No, but they are condemning the puppet. It is essential today to make men of those puppets of yesterday.

I have a tendency to underestimate my merits. This is, it seems, so rare a mania that it appears suspect. People see in it pretense, hypocrisy, affectation.

Due perhaps merely to low blood-pressure.

. . . In this sense one is quite right to speak of a "conversion." For just like the conversion to Catholicism, conversion to Communism implies an abdication of free inquiry, submission to a dogma, recognition of an orthodoxy. It happens that all orthodoxies are suspect to me.

The important thing, they say, is to *believe*, and all the rest shall be added unto them. After which they arrange for themselves and dress up for their purposes the teachings of the Gospel, and claim to reconcile themselves with God by recognizing that they sin, that they have sinned, that they are sinners. It is their way of being religious that makes religion hateful. It is in the name of Religion that they are fighting and this is why it is Religion that we are fighting.

But, I must admit it, what leads me to Communism is not Marx, it is the Gospel. It is the Gospel that formed me. It is the precepts of the Gospel, according to the bent they gave to my thought, to the conduct of my whole being, that inculcated in me doubt of my own value and respect of others, of their thought, of their value, and that fortified in me that disdain, that repugnance (which probably was already native) for all individual possession, for all monopolizing.

It would not be hard for me to set down the few words of Christ, to which I cannot even say that I am trying to make my conduct conform, so intimately have they become my flesh and blood; so that, if I abide by them, it is not at all as by external commands, but as by the very laws of my instinct, as by an inner necessity; so that I cannot elude them.

Vittel, 4 July

In an issue of *Le Figaro*, already old, which I find on a table in the hotel drawing-room, an interesting article by Edmond Jaloux in which he speaks of Rainer Maria Rilke and of the patience he showed in the slow composition of his poems.

This is perhaps true for the *Duino Elegies*; but I recall having heard Rilke say that most of his poems were written as fast as his pen, or rather his pencil, would write in a little notebook that he carried about on his walks, then copied most often without a single change. He showed me the notebook he had on him (he had come to lunch at Villa Montmorency), in which numerous poems were scribbled, "improvised," he told me, "on a bench in the Luxembourg Gardens." I did not see a single erasure.

Probably there are very few precepts of wisdom (and I wonder even if there are any) that, looked at from a certain angle, do not seem folly.

Take the best advantage of what is; strain one's ingenuity to im-

proved it, rather than seeking to change it. This is what X. has done throughout his life.

I tell myself today that in order to perform valuable work I should first have to settle down, and I am well aware how prejudicial to me can be this wandering and disjointed life I am living. But the only place in which it is permitted me to settle down is Cuverville, where I have against me sky and earth and men; where my thought soon becomes numb; where all the fruits in my orchard are stillborn, etc.

All-powerful sentimental reasons keep me from settling elsewhere. But at least I can understand how ruinous is that theory which at first seems so wise; and it is from bitter experience that I know that one spends much more trying to get something better out of the mediocre than doing everything over anew at once.

It is but a bourgeois ideal that the bourgeois at present proposes for the proletarian's ascent.

Porché's book on Verlaine;<sup>30</sup> or rather: the congratulations he is receiving! . . .

And yet who shall say how much discreet and sly abjection is often hidden behind the hypocritical cover of decorum of bourgeois decency, etc.? But Verlaine got along without a cover. Opinion is taking revenge for the fact that he paid no attention to it and revealed himself as he was.

His poetry would not be so utterly spontaneous without that lack of restraint you now reproach him with.

Proverb of Hell: Descend to the bottom of the well if you wish to see the stars.<sup>31</sup>

The abominable thing that can fill the heart with sorrow, no, is not only, it is not even so much, the hideousness of this world as the thought that it could be so beautiful . . . the thought that it depended only on man to . . . and to change the undergrowth into a garden. . . .

It depended only on *you*. . . .

(I know gardens so charming that when one goes into them with a book one does not even think of opening it.)

Instead of which . . .

<sup>30</sup> *Verlaine tel qu'il fut (Verlaine as He Really Was)* came out in 1933.

<sup>31</sup> A recollection of the "Proverbs of Hell" in William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which Gide translated.

And even thus I should find this world wonderful, with these afflictions which permit these . . . with these shadows, etc. . . . if only I were not bothered by: . . . *feeling on the right side*.

It is easy for me to endure the scorn of the rich; but the look of an outcast enters my heart more deeply than . . .

This state of things has become unbearable to me, all the more unbearable since I thrive on it, since my brother suffers from it and not I. Unbearable this thought: what is today will be and nothing can change anything.

The masterpiece of casuistry, of crafty hypocrisy, that is to be found, in the third issue of *La Revue du siècle*, in the commentary on the protest that, through a process-server, I forced those young Jesuits to insert in reply to their calumnies of the first issue. The sense (the love and need) of truth and of justice is profoundly distorted in them.

Probably nothing distorts more, and more irremediably, that exigent need of exactness than the mystical culture to which those minds were subjected at a still too tender age. (Same result, though somewhat differently achieved, among the Moslems.) Insist on this very important point.

The mere idea of defending, of having to defend Christ against Communist comrades strikes me as profoundly absurd. It is against the Russian popes, the priests, etc. that I want to defend him, and to restore him to you. It is against religion that I am protesting, against the Church, dogmas, faith, etc.

But precisely because you, Communists, do not admit the divinity of Christ, it is as a man that you must judge him, and, consequently, you must note and admit that he fully deserved being accused and condemned by the very ones who are your worst enemies, by the powers against which you rise up, by the representatives of wealth . . . of Roman imperialism. And consequently Christ is one of you.

*Cuverville, 12 August*

I have not written anything in long months. I have even interrupted this journal in which I was trying to clarify my thoughts and of which the most recent pages, as I reread them, struck me as dull and merely going over what I had previously expressed with more vigor. It seemed to me that the climate in which my mind was struggling was as unpropitious as possible for the work of art. That sort of commitment I had made paralyzed the free play of my faculties; under better physiological conditions perhaps I should have found strength to override this; a constant fatigue made me consider superhuman the effort it would

have taken "to raise so heavy a weight" and I remained crushed by the enormity of today's problems, complicated even more by a number of misunderstandings arising from imperfect notions and conventional judgments on the very elements of the problems. The problems, it seemed to me, could find a satisfactory solution only after everything had first been questioned anew. Of every sentence I should have tried to write in order to fix my thought approximately, there is not a single word that it would not have been good, beforehand, to define, so that it should express nothing but what I intended to make it express. The words *country* and *nationality*, for instance, *individualism* and *communism* signify for me (in the lexicon I have made for my own personal use and in order to find my way in my own thoughts and because, all the same, thought cannot take shape and become conscious of itself without the help of words), these words have but the meaning I attribute to them. This is what allows me to reconcile *individualism* and *communism*; and when I write that I am unwilling to recognize as essentially irreconcilable a "properly understood" communism and a "properly understood" individualism, I mean: such as I understand them myself. I must therefore explain how I understand them. It is certain that I do not see an equalitarian communism, or at least that I see equality of conditions only at the outset; that for each person it would imply merely equal chances, but in no wise a uniformity of qualities, a standardization that I consider at one and the same time impossible and hardly desirable, for the individual as well as for the mass. And, likewise, an internationalization of economic interests would in no wise imply the suppression and ignoring of racial or geographical peculiarities, the happily irreducible differences among cultures and traditions. The very diversity of the players makes the wealth and beauty of the symphony, and wishing that all the instruments, brasses, violins, oboes, or clarinets, produced the same sound would be as absurd as to think that each instrument would play better if it broke away from the ensemble of the orchestra and ceased following the measure. Or, if one prefers another image, I shall speak of the ship *Argo*, on which I am willing to believe no one possessed anything of his own and that a single will, common to all, guided the ensemble, but which would rapidly have gone down if everyone had assumed the same function.

And since I believe, furthermore, that the personality never asserts itself more than by renouncing itself, it seems to me that . . . and that the only ones who can worry about communism are the indecisive personalities, or those who think they can assert themselves only at the expense of others.

14 August

It seems to me that the World Congress in preparation <sup>32</sup> must pay quite special attention to honoring the young people who refuse to take part in the game of war, English or American students, French school-teachers, "objectors" of all countries; to clearing them of that perfidious accusation of cowardice by which people try to discredit them and disqualify their conduct. It is important to let them know, in reply to such calumnies, that we give them our esteem, often even our admiration, knowing full well that it requires more real courage to be opposed individually to a collective enthusiasm than to follow the example, even if it were in order to face death; knowing all the initiative that this personal courage involves, and that it leads, not only to material sanctions, but also to those, even more dreadful for some, of opinion.

It behooves this congress to propose this new form of heroism to youth. Texts might help — such as this one which I extract from the "Notes" (written under the inspiration of *Les Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* <sup>33</sup>) published last December by the review *Esprit*. The author was twenty-two when he wrote them, in April 1924; despite this declaration he allowed himself to be incorporated into the colonial infantry and was killed, the following year, in the Rif War. Family reasons prevented giving his name, says H. G., who hands on this posthumous message:

"Put everything at stake, risk one's life, give it on purpose for a Revolution, so that a step forward may be taken — what is greater? But for these mad wars in which men are sacrificed, not even to illusions, not even perhaps expressly to the interests of a few . . . but to a sclerotic, inhuman, soulless system that is turning in the same groove, that is taking a tail-spin, leading the world to some unimaginable slaughter, to some haggard and empty rage — for such wars, who will convince me of being a madman or a coward if I say: No?"

I do not hide from myself the fact that, faced with the Hitlerian threat, such declarations may seem to some particularly inopportune; on the contrary, I believe them more useful than ever at the moment when the nationalist fury of certain countries is becoming aggressive and may, through fear or emulation, lead neighboring countries into a parallel madness.

29 August

These last lines scarcely satisfy me, and I am quite aware of all that remains to be said. The question is rather: does all that the conservatives are protecting deserve to be saved?

<sup>32</sup> The World Youth Congress against Fascism and War.

<sup>33</sup> *The St. Petersburg Evenings* by Joseph de Maistre.

It seems to me quite useless to reply: the best will always survive the shipwreck; for nothing seems less certain to me; and that confidence implies a mysticism that I resist elsewhere. I fear, very much on the contrary, that in this case the good may be swept away with the worst, and refuse to believe in a God who "will always recognize his own." In any adventure of this type one launches into the problematical and it is no good saying later on: "I did not intend just that"; for it is always just *that* that it was important to foresee.

It seems to me that there has not been brought out what, to say the very least, seems strange: that "mysticism" today is on the side of those who profess atheism and irreligion. It is as a religion that the Communist doctrine exalts and feeds the enthusiasm of the young of today. Their very action implies a belief; and if they transfer their ideal from heaven to earth, as I do with them, it is none the less in the name of an ideal that they struggle and, if need be, sacrifice themselves. And even, and this frightens me, that Communist religion involves, it too, a dogma, an orthodoxy, texts to which reference is made, an abdication of criticism. . . . This is too much. I very well understand the need of calling on authority and of rallying the masses to it. But here I give up; or at least, if I remain with them, it is because my very heart and reason advise me to do so and not because "*it is written . . .*" Whether the text invoked be by Marx or Lenin, I cannot abide by it unless my heart and my reason approve it. I did not escape from the authority of Aristotle or St. Paul to fall under theirs. Yet I recognize the necessity of a credo to bring together individual wills; but my adhesion to that credo has no value unless it is freely consented to. I add that, in the majority of cases, the so-called freedom of thought remains utterly illusory. And I understand very well that desire to unify thought which is today tempting Hitler, in imitation of Mussolini; but which can be achieved only at the price of what a frightful impoverishment of thought! The specific and individual value yields to some collective value or other, which ceases to have any intellectual value at all.

1 September

To the questions asked in a circular of the Organizing Committee of the World Youth Congress against Fascism and War, I replied:

"In this autumn of 1933, before the arrogant resurgence of nationalisms, before the glorification of ancient idols in whose name nations are being led to combat, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution takes on a particular importance. We must take advantage of it to consolidate our union.

"Today people claim to see Moscow propaganda in every popular uprising in any country whatever; that there is propaganda goes with-



out saying, but perhaps not in the way people think. The event whose sixteenth anniversary we are celebrating today has, in itself and in its example, a sufficient force of persuasion, far more stimulating than subsidies and speeches; no repression can do anything against it. The chief force of that propaganda is that it favors a legitimate aspiration. The example of the October days aroused peoples from the despondency in which capitalistic oppression maintained them. The great cry uttered by the U.S.S.R. aroused all hopes, but would not have found an echo if it had not replied, for so many hearts, to so many muffled moans; for so many minds, to so many obvious failures.

"There was a time when it was toward France, after 1789, that all eyes turned. But the cause we cherish today is no longer that of a single country. The enemy remains the same, in France as well as everywhere; it is against him that we must unite our efforts. That the U.S.S.R. still has to overcome very great difficulties of all sorts, it may be; but those who shout failure are rejoicing a bit too soon; it is important to prove this to them."

My reply to the "conscientious objectors" has been lying on my table for a fortnight; I have not been able to make up my mind to send it. Not that my thought (I was about to say: my conviction) is uncertain on this point; but I am held back by the fear that it might be used to force me to play a political role for which I feel utterly unqualified.

In that declaration I am probably wrong to speak of "admiration." It does not enter in here; and, moreover, it necessarily decreases as these cases of insubordination cease to be isolated and as, by their very number (as is happening for the school-teachers), they have a chance of escaping sanctions. Here, as elsewhere, admiration can be directed only to the leaders; the others follow. The causes that turn out to be the most triumphal originally needed martyrs. But admiration (which the martyrs can arouse), but the martyr himself, cannot prove the excellence of the cause.

Today's *Le Temps* publishes a long letter signed C. J. Gabel in reply, it so happens, to the "conscientious objectors." How can this correspondent fail to be aware that when he quotes the words of Paul: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God,*" etc. (these are M. C. J. Gabel's italics) . . . how can he fail to be aware that Hitler would not speak otherwise? Even here Paul or Peter is not contrasted with Christ himself — whom M. C. J. Gabel takes care not to quote here, and justifiably so. Whence also the serious embarrassment of the Vatican, which no longer dares declare itself. For is it admissible for the Church to subordinate herself

and yield on this point? . . . What discredit such a vassalization involves! How could a true Christian endure it? How could the Pope?

2 September

Yes, for a fortnight I have been turning this question over and over in my mind. It is appropriate to expect a reply only from the event itself — which, as ever and whatever it turns out to be, will confirm everyone in his own opinion. For since when has the experience of history been of any use? And to whom? What is the meaning of an "experience" that cannot be verified and repeated, of which the elements elude our precise knowledge and in which, when the omelet has turned out badly, one can never really know whether it is the fault of the cook, of the frying-pan, of the butter, or of the eggs?

How wise is everything Valéry says about history! <sup>34</sup> And how weak the arguments that Madelin opposed to him yesterday in *L'Écho de Paris*! To neglect the teaching of history, he says in substance, amounts to refusing the advice of a guide who, already knowing the road, would warn, etc. . . . As if one could ever know in advance new dangers! As if the road were ever the same, and the same he who enters upon it! As if the future ever reproduced the past! As if the difficulty did not come precisely from the fact that one is constantly playing an ever new game and with cards whose value has not yet been tried!

The reasoning is too simple indeed, and common sense borders on stupidity when it makes one say that, faced with an adversary who is arming and threatening, the only way of making him respect you is to arm even more. I should like, once more, not to call upon mysticism; but yet I cannot refuse all value to intellectual or moral factors. I am told that for a declaration like that of the students at Oxford and elsewhere, or that of the French school-teachers, the moment is, to say the least, ill chosen. I believe, quite on the contrary, that only by reason of its apparent untimeliness does such a gesture take on its real value. What is the good of declaring that one will not fight if there is no question of fighting? It is essential to find out, and this is just the question, whether or not numbers and force alone count. . . . Do not certain people have a right to doubt that it is possible to crush out the spirit? Cannot the spirit hold brute force at a distance? In order to do this must it too have recourse to arms? And is not the mere fact of having

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<sup>34</sup> Notably in his essays grouped under the title *Regards sur le monde actuel* (*Reflections on the World Today*), first published in 1931. The essay on history includes such remarks as these: "History can justify anything you like. It teaches strictly nothing, for it contains and gives examples of everything. . . . Nothing has been more discredited by the last war than pretensions to foresight. Yet it seems to me that there was then no lack of historical knowledge . . ." (translation by Francis Scarfe, Pantheon Books, 1948).

recourse to them, in itself, an abdication? It is in the form of a refusal to submit the spirit to matter that that so much condemned resistance, that *insubordination*, appears to me.

*Cuverville, 5 September*

Thinking over the weak arguments that Madelin opposes to Valéry, I have come to believe that nothing so confirmed Valéry's opinion as the comparative study he was led to make, for his speech welcoming Marshal Pétain into the Academy, of the contrasting strategy of Foch and Pétain: the former relying precisely on the teaching of history, the other refusing to take account of earlier experience and judging, with superior wisdom, that it can be of no value in the face of necessarily new conditions. It is to that consideration of the past that we owe our most ruinous errors in the "last war"; it was that clinging to the so-called lessons of history that made the machine-guns be set up to the rear, which monstrously sacrificed our infantry by hurling it forward in the conviction, "based on experience," that the dash of the first offensive belonged to the infantry alone, etc. The best lesson that Madelin might have gathered from history is just that the past cannot throw light on the future and that, in order to face up to new events, it is better to have a mind blind to tradition than dazzled by its false brilliance.

In *Le Temps* of 5 September Lucien Romier most judiciously contrasts the "patriotism of the past" to the present nationalism of certain countries. "We are not sure," he says rightly, "that the nations of today, bubbling over with nationalism on the surface, *would resist* the defeats, *the changes of regime*, and the extreme privations that the nations of 1914 endured." This leaves room for some hope.

What could be more compromising for one's country than linking the idea of one's country to the idea of a regime?

I read, and not without emotion, Einstein's new declaration. Obviously. But he would have spoken likewise in 1914. He would speak likewise when a new war was unleashed. Once more: it is easy to declare that one will not fight when there is no question of fighting. A declaration of this sort takes on significance only at the approach of danger and when, it so happens, it seems untimely. Yet it is a feeling quite similar to the one that prompted Einstein's letter that made me not send to B. the lines I set down above, which made me refuse to become a member of the league he directs. Hitlerism and even Fascism remain a frightful danger; gagged, the spirit loses its eloquence. One would like to imagine it as triumphal even so. . . . Decidedly the risk is too great.

How much bolder I felt when the gesture I risked involved and

compromised no one but myself! Has one the right to be rash for any but oneself?

*13 September*

The case of Einstein, however, remains most peculiar; it is as a German that he refused to take up arms. If he consents to take arms today, he does so as an expatriate and to fight against his own country, the threat of which he is well qualified to judge sufficiently. We must listen to him, and also when he says that his feeling remains the same. In both of these declarations, although they seem to contradict each other, he has it in for the idea of Fatherland. (I mean the idea of Fatherland as the nationalists understand it: that form of idolatry.)

*8 October*

For too long now I have forgotten the art of being happy. My head is full of a heap of dreadful "whereases." The simplest happiness is permitted to too few people. The wailing and protest of the others cover all the harmonies of earth and heaven. Telling myself that I can do nothing about it does not keep me from hearing them.

*Cuverville, 27 October*

Would the man who is favored by unjust fate dare say that he can do nothing about it? For a long time, without suspecting it, did I not take advantage of poverty? Is it not what others lacked that allowed me to lack nothing? Those advantages that blinded me, that permitted my thoughtlessness, I vomit them. I can no longer resign myself to being happy.

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I have loved Racine's lines above all other literary productions. I admire Shakespeare tremendously; but with Racine I feel an emotion that Shakespeare never gives me: that of perfection. Jean S., in a very interesting discussion, reproaches Racine's characters with not going on living once the curtain has fallen, whereas those of Shakespeare, he says very justly, appear for a moment before the footlights, but we feel that they do not end there and that we could find them again, beyond the stage. But I just happen to like that exact limitation, that non-protruding from the frame, that sharpness of outline. Shakespeare, doubtless, is more human; but something quite different is involved here: the triumph of a sublime fitness, a delightful harmony in which everything enters in and contributes, which fully satisfies at one and the same time intelligence, heart, and senses. Man and nature, in his wind-swept plays, all poetry laughs, weeps, and vibrates in Shakespeare; Racine is at the summit of art.

Rather stupefying article by Morand at the head of 1933, the new weekly that Massis is launching. Others wished for "more light." Morand wishes for more air. "Give us air! Give us air!" is the title of the article, in which he explains what he means by this. The article ends with this sentence: "We want clean corpses," which I could not manage to understand. I had to have it explained to me. He was alluding, I was told, to the recent assassination of Dufrenne.<sup>35</sup> Does Morand then want only respectable people to be killed?

*Lausanne, 30 November*

Settled here for the last three weeks, I am keeping an eye on and pretending to direct the rehearsals of the play taken from my *Caves du Vatican*, which the young Bellettriens of Lausanne had got the idea of performing for their annual celebration.<sup>36</sup> Excellent occasion to make contact with the youth of French Switzerland.

Arnold Naville had given me, before I left Paris, a pamphlet on the shooting of 9 November of last year in Geneva, which I read with a very keen interest. Having obtained (not without difficulty, for it is not found in any bookshop or at any news-stand) several copies, I gave one to G. L., at whose house I had gone to lunch. Yesterday I received from G. L. a rather long letter of protest: "And to begin with, how can anyone dare to compare that affair with the Dreyfus affair! No connection," G. L. asserts. But there is; there is; in both cases I find the same respect for the judgment of the courts, the same refusal to examine it anew. "I skimmed through the pamphlet," says G. L. He should have read it attentively. He protests of the excellence of the judges, of their complete honorability, of the well-known subversive attitude of some of the writers of the pamphlet, exactly as the anti-dreyfusards did when faced with Zola's *J'accuse*.<sup>37</sup> His mind is made up; he will not change his opinion. Useless to try to discuss. Consequently I content myself with thanking him for his letter in the most courteous and polite way I can.

To be sure, G. L. is already excited, and to the point of exaspera-

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<sup>35</sup> Oscar Dufrenne, Municipal Councillor for the 10th Arrondissement and director of several big theaters, including the Folies Bergère, was found dead in his office on 25 September 1933, his skull fractured by blows from a hammer.

<sup>36</sup> André Gide himself adapted in 1933 his *sotie* of 1914 into a three-act farce in 17 tableaux. This text was presented in December 1933 at Lausanne, Montreux, and Geneva by the Société "Belles-Lettres"; it will soon be published for the first time in Volume V of the *Théâtre complet d'André Gide* (Ides et Calendes, Neuchâtel). An inferior adaptation by Yvonne Lartigaud was played at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris.

<sup>37</sup> Zola's famous letter of accusation appeared in *L'Aurore* in January 1898 and made such charges that he himself was twice tried and sentenced.

tion, by the result of the recent elections, which makes the red flag fly over the town halls of Lausanne and Geneva. . . . What angers him the most is that "Geneva had not deserved that." Did she not do, for the poor people, more than any other city in the world? Poverty is, so to speak, suppressed. Well then, of what are the "have-nots" complaining? Consequently their claims are most often prompted by impure elements. Yes, but there also happens to be the rest of the world, and working people today know and feel themselves to be all interdependent. That well-being, that isolating comfort the society of Geneva has enjoyed until now, were perhaps due merely to invisible woes, as out of sight, as hidden, as the boiler-rooms on ocean liners are from the luxury cabins. . . . It matters little to me, and that the arrow that pierces Geneva's heart was shot from a distance; it is because of the unconscious protective egotism she represents, and because of her very "good conscience" that Geneva deserved to be a target.

In a remarkable little book that has just come out,<sup>38</sup> Ramuz speaks precisely of "those people, provided with an income, who live in security, who never have to wonder, for instance, whether society is not badly constructed, since they owe their situation to it; who never have to wonder, for instance, whether injustice is not the rule, since they have good reasons not to find it unjust in regard to them." — Yes, that is just it: they refuse to raise, and refuse to let others raise, certain essential questions (because they judge that there is no reason to question anew a state of things and problems that have been solved, they think, once and for all, and in their favor). And, moreover, they could raise those questions only in an abstract, artificial way; whereas for others those questions remain urgent; for others who do not so much *raise* them as they *live* them. And one does not even have to translate those questions, although it is revealed today that those questions are raised in all the languages of the earth; and it is in them that all peoples feel themselves communing today. Yes, it hardly amounts to playing on words; in *communism* there is also *communion*.

*Lausanne, 1 December*

I call a "warped mind" the one that believes a God can come and keep his eye on, or poke his finger or his nose into, the tasks of this earth. It does not bother me to call established natural laws "divine"; this word does not imply much if one admits at the same time that a God, having once promulgated them, cannot himself later on retract them. It does not distort the mind to believe that God makes the stars gravitate; what distorts the mind is admitting that that God can,

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<sup>38</sup> *Taille de l'homme (Man's Measure)*.

at will, stop them when a Joshua asks it of him. All confidence in God misleads dangerously as soon as that confidence ceases to be simply the certainty that a physical law cannot be violated and that man can count on it. Thus it is that he must understand the word: God, who is *faithful*; and not otherwise. It is in this sense that I wrote: "The (so-called) miracles are God's *infidelities*." Any prayer that asks God to intervene in the operation of his own laws is impious. And what I am writing here seems to me so obviously true that I am almost ashamed to express it.

5 December

"Besides, it's very simple," said that excellent lady at that excellent luncheon yesterday. . . . "Besides, it's very simple: if I didn't have servants I couldn't knit any more for the poor."

14 December

In *Le Temps* of 13 December: "A young Russian Pascal." This is the title of a brief article about a certain Nicolas Dmitriev, nine years old, who is reported to be gifted with extraordinary mathematical powers. Professor Tchistiakov, who has examined him, declares that in his forty years of teaching he has never encountered such faculties. This takes place in Moscow.

Will Communism try to reduce young Dmitriev to some common measure? . . . The leaders of the U.S.S.R. are not so stupid. Dmitriev is given special care, a special treatment. Of course! And the regime will not be any less Communist on this account.

At Geneva for the performance of the Bellettriens. It took place yesterday evening in a hall (of the Comédie) not too empty; the stage, noticeably smaller than the one in Lausanne, came to life more readily; in addition, the actors knew their roles better. The good will of the audience equaled, even surpassed, that of the Montreux audience. Finally, the play, with a third removed (they began at scene ii and stopped at the xiii<sup>th</sup> immediately followed by the xvi<sup>th</sup> and last), did not tire the audience so annoyingly and the show finished a little before midnight. It is true that yesterday's audience would have been willing to take more. They followed the dialogue, and every jest carried so long as the inexperienced actors deigned to make the most of it. It depended only on them to interest and amuse much more.

However hidden I remained and obviously eager not to be seen, Martinet managed to find me and to cling to me in a rather embarrassing way. In the corner of a deserted bar where I had taken refuge during an intermission to escape the eyes of the curious, I was approached by the son of Dr. Andréæ, whom I had not seen since he was

a young child. I should have recognized him without his telling me his name, he resembles his father so much. Martinet, who did not let go of me, introduced himself to him.

I had criticized certain passages of his book<sup>39</sup> in which he attributed to Dr. Andréæ (the father) remarks that he could not possibly have made in the complete state of ignorance in which he then was as to my homosexual tastes, and furthermore knowing me to be greatly in love with my cousin, Emmanuèle. I should add that, very anxious then to "normalize" myself, I had not feared asking him, when he sent me to spend the winter at La Brévine, if I did not run the risk in that lost hamlet of "lacking women" — which, so it seemed to me, had somewhat (but not too much) surprised him since he knew me to be in love elsewhere and already almost engaged. And, naturally, from these apocryphal remarks (but not altogether invented, for a part of the remarks remained true and I am willing to believe that Martinet, without being aware of it himself and without any evil intent, gave them that little twist which, even without his knowing it, distorted their significance) Martinet drew conclusions that were absurd and clearly contrary to reality. The Andréæ son had written to me at that time to protest against the abuse Martinet had made of his father's testimony. I had informed Martinet of that protest, which, he replied at once, amazed him. In addition, said Martinet, he had, before giving it to the printer, submitted his manuscript to Dr. Andréæ, who, after reading it, had given his full *approbatur* and even had presumably annotated it in his own hand. Arnold Naville told me of having seen the manuscript and noted that Dr. A. had added remarks. I should be very curious to see all that too. It is quite possible that Dr. Andréæ approved separately his words about me reported in Martinet's book, then those about homosexuality. What I blame Martinet for is letting the reader infer, by the connection he establishes, that Dr. A. already knew my homosexual inclinations at that time and was concerned with curing me of them. (I have just reread the pages in question; they seem to me just as distorted as the first day, and this is why their indiscretion is painful to me.)

What would Dr. A. say of this if he were still alive? What would he say especially of what is got out of his pseudo-testimony? As well as I can remember, Martinet makes Andréæ say that he sent me to La Brévine for a psychical cure (and this with an eye to my sexual tastes). Now, I repeat that Andréæ knew nothing of that at the time. He knew that I was then suffering from respiratory disorders, which he judged, and very rightly, to be due to nervous causes rather than to a bad bronchial or lung condition. It was for this, and not at all for what

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<sup>39</sup> *André Gide, l'amour et la divinité* (*André Gide, Love and Divinity*) by Édouard Martinet appeared in 1931.



Martinet implies, that he sent me to spend the winter at La Brévine. Consequently it was of those disorders that that austere hibernation cured me, and not at all of those other "disorders" of which there was then no question at all.

Yesterday evening I did not want to revive that already old quarrel, though Martinet made a slight allusion to it. Moreover, I no longer recalled precisely enough the details of that posthumous false testimony. But I insist on noting it here (and have been able to do so only at some length), for it may be that later on some perfidious argument may be drawn from it, as Vanderem did not fail to do as soon as Martinet's book appeared. This is indeed all he retained of this book, which, to be sure, hardly contributed anything new save that very suspect testimony.

For, quite naturally also, it is always the false that is at a premium and takes precedence over the truth, if only one gives a helping hand or even leaves it alone. For truth is bothersome and falsehood profitable (otherwise people would not lie). This is indeed why, of all texts, the apocryphal ones are the most often quoted. (I should like very much to know whether, in the Gospel text, the little final addition "and shall inherit everlasting life" is not one of them? Without it Christ's word: "Every one that . . . hath forsaken . . . brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold . . ." exactly agrees with Communism.)

You were told: fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; then, with God missing, the fear remained on your hands. Understand today that wisdom begins where fear ends, that it begins with the revolt of Prometheus.

You were told, you let yourself be told, that it is first essential to believe. It is first essential to doubt.

There is not one of these conversions in which I do not discover some shameful secret motivation: fatigue, fear, blighted hope, malady, sexual or sentimental impotence.

Today people call "constructive minds" the prudent restorers of ruins.

For too long now I have dared think only in a whisper; and this is a way of lying.

*Syracuse, 6 February*

Arrived the first. Came directly from Marseille. But changes at Rome and Naples, with stops of a few hours. It would be most ungracious not to recognize that Rome is splendid; more glorious, without a doubt, than yesterday; as exalting as possible. But at the same time it has lost much of that secret charm that used to fascinate me. Yesterday almost everything had to be discovered. The coals were burning under the ashes. Now everything spreads out and struts in broad daylight. What hides today, on the contrary, is poverty. Everything is clean, neat (i.e., cleaned up), sparkling. But nothing recalls Keats, or Stendhal, or Goethe.

Enforced visit (to get my ticket stamped) to the Mostra Fascista; great temporary exposition building, which would seem ridiculous, frightful, if it were not soon to be torn down, if it laid claim to permanence. Architectural journalism. In the inside, a number of rooms, very cleverly arranged, hardly exhibit anything but statistics, lists, photographs of "heroes," newspaper clippings relating the noble deeds of Fascism. An atmosphere utterly unbreathable for the work of art. But there can be no question of works here. This is the time of action; anyone who wants to can suppose that the rest will come along later.

On the other hand, Naples struck me as sordid, without charm; and the people swarming, more poverty-stricken, more ragged than ever. The alleyways all decked out with multicolored wash hung up to dry, as picturesque as ever; but I can no longer enjoy it.

I am occupying here (Villa Politi) a vast and very comfortable room; and the lure of the outside is not so great that I cannot work in it. It is a habit to be resumed; and also that of chatting with this notebook. I had let the preceding one be encumbered with social and political preoccupations that I want to banish for a time from my mind. Left in Paris that notebook, in which for weeks and months I have written nothing worth while. If only anxiety about the little time left me to live did not constantly come and stop, interrupt all impetus, I should still feel young enough, and, all together, healthier than at the time of "long projects and vast thoughts."

Yesterday I got back to *Geneviève*. Upon reading the second chapter to R. M. du G. in Marseille, ten days ago, it did not seem to me (as I feared) so bad but that I can and must continue it.

Rather irritated by the reading of *Manhattan Transfer* by Dos Passos, of which Yves Allégret had spoken so enthusiastically. Succession of images, probably exact, but so rapid that the retina cannot get

enough of an impression. One retains nothing of it. And how many devices in the sense-notations! No echo; and it can lead only to despair. I find it hard to read to the end. None of these unsubstantial creatures interests me. Were they to disappear, the world would not be much impoverished. With none among them can I commit myself and become involved.

I have reread *Othello* for the sixth time, with an ever keener admiration. And it even seems to me that I was somewhat unjust in what I said of the lack of psychological novelty in Shakespeare's characters. Each of the characters, definitely in his place, lets one suspect sufficient mystery and shadowy background to feed infinite reflections. The drama is constructed between the imaginary verisimilitude and the invisible reality of sentiments. Wonderful subject, which is far from being exhausted by the action. And this is fitting.

7 February

Oh, how little care man has for what might make the earth smile! What has he done with it and its flowers? Each one wants to appropriate what belongs only to all.

8 February

Something strange, odd, and gripping. This is what I should like, knowing well that only the unexpected can delight and plunge into a state of trance. But my subject (*Geneviève*) does not admit of it. I owe it to my heroine to remain reasonable, since it is only through her that I am expressing myself.

A school of priests passes on the road. I stop to look at them, if not at length since they are passing, at least with all the intensity I can, one after the other. The first are not yet fourteen years old; those of the third and last group, already somewhat hirsute. Ninety in all, whom three masters, barely older than they, are taking out for exercise. I seek, among these young faces, I seek in vain some inkling of curiosity, of intelligence, of boldness. It is an extraordinary exhibit of all the varieties and shades of foolishness, sly, smug, or sullen; in the eye of none of them, not the slightest "spirituality" (oh, a lot I care!), but not the slightest flame either. Nothing to dampen in them; nothing either that can be kindled; nothing lofty that must be dominated. They came to this, not through a secret mystical vocation, but through laziness, through meanness, and because it is not very evident what they could have done elsewhere. But was I not mistaken? Was this not a charitable institution for backward children? No, alas, there could be no mistake: it was a nursery of priests. And I imagined them spread

out over the country, assuming spiritual responsibility, ordering and ordered themselves; not religious but devout. Material for a nightmare.

"What! You were able to see all that merely in the time you watched them pass?"

"Yes indeed! And you would have thought the same. I should have said to you: show me one, just one, of whom it can be hoped: that one at least. . . . And you would still be looking for him."<sup>1</sup>

Preludes or fugues of *The Well-Tempered Clavichord* . . . when I think of the twenty or more that I used to know by heart, imperturbably, and could play impeccably "in a row" (as X used to say), to which I have said farewell forever — I am seized with a sort of rage against myself, of despair.

But all the time I spent keeping them up! To be sure, I once derived much instruction from them; I no longer derived anything but a certain happy equilibrium, an almost seraphic contentment comparable to that serenity which the Christian seeks and finds in prayer; but I was too inclined to *take refuge* in them. That perfection which was offered me (in which pure mathematics begin to palpitate, to smile: incarnation of necessity) *sufficed* me only too well and counseled against effort. . . .

To speak more simply: others, and many others, play and will play Bach as well as and even much better than I. It does not require so much cleverness. For Chopin it is another matter — it requires a peculiar comprehension that I do not believe a musician can have without being above all an artist. I know very well what I mean by this. Even that certain sense of the fantastic which brings him close to Baudelaire. That sort of necessity, of logical necessitating which had to be sought henceforth elsewhere than in counterpoint and which, at once, became psychological. . . . As inspired as Mozart, but more meditative.

They do not know how to play him. They distort the very intonation of his voice. They launch into a poem of Chopin like people utterly sure in advance. There should be doubt, surprise, trembling; above all, no wit ("wit hurts me"), but no stupidity either; that is to say: no conceit. This is asking too much of the virtuoso. Is it not he who harvests the laurels and takes precedence over the artist? The creator may well be proud (although the greatest are modest); the virtuoso is conceited. But why go over all this again?

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<sup>1</sup> Since then I have encountered a school of young men clothed in homespun (future monks?) incomparably more alert, with a more open, more intelligent face, some even with a very beautiful expression at once smiling and grave; but having, immediately afterward, seen the others pass again, I was confirmed in my impression. [A.]

11 February

The mystic: "You are turning your back to the light." "I do so to look at the rainbow."

I borrow this image from Goethe, whose second *Faust* I am rereading. Meanwhile I am saturating myself with Voltaire's *Contes*,<sup>2</sup> long and short, in the charming edition of Schiffrin,<sup>3</sup> and do not succeed, any more than I did before, in setting *Candide* far above all the others. I even wonder if it is not to the slight naughty bits in it that *Candide* owes its remarkable fame. The satire in it often falls a bit short and in it Voltaire's laugh seems to me more a grin than elsewhere. He writes *Candide* to amuse himself; and while amusing himself he amuses. But one is aware also that he wants to prove something without one's being very well aware what, nor whom he is attacking. To show that man is innumerablely unhappy on this earth, there is no need for so much wit. Religion teaches us this too; Voltaire knows this very well and at times it embarrasses him. If he were to return among us today, how upset he would be to have so little overcome many things that he either was attacking badly or else was wrong to attack; and to have played into the hands of so many fools! Goethe, if he came to life today, would find more satisfaction, or Montaigne.

15 February

It is still so cold that this morning I momentarily took for snowflakes the almond petals that the wind mingled with the rain. Were we not told yesterday that it was snowing at Taormina and Catania? This bad weather keeps me at work, and I have got considerably ahead with *Geneviève* the last few days.

17 February

Worked very little today (I had worked very well yesterday), but read a number of pages of Hölderlin (*Das Thalia-Fragment of Hyperion*), reread the first chapters of *Zadig* and the second act of *Iphigénie* (aloud).<sup>4</sup>

18 February

The need of making a verb agree with an enumeration of subjects is no more imperative for Racine than I feel it to be in myself. Wonderful examples:

. . . *Mais le fer, le bandeau, la flamme* EST toute prête.

<sup>2</sup> The *Tales*, which include *Candide*, *Zadig*, *Micromégas*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Schiffrin created the series of one-volume classics known as *Editions de la Pléiade*, which for some time now have been published by Éditions Gallimard.

<sup>4</sup> *Hyperion* (1797-9) is a novel concerning the Greek uprising against the Turks in 1770. *Zadig* is one of Voltaire's tales, and *Iphigénie* one of Racine's best-known tragedies.

. . . *Que ma foi, mon amour, mon honneur y CONSENTE.*  
or again, in *Phèdre*:

. . . *Mon repos, mon bonheur, SEMBLAIT être affermi.*<sup>5</sup>

But these examples are, it may be said, motivated by the necessities of versification; examples taken from prose remain more cogent.

It seems to me that, for the beauty of the lines (and groups of lines), *Iphigénie* is only slightly below *Phèdre*. I reread with rapture this masterpiece, though a bit artificial, a bit constructed, a bit external to Racine as to me, a bit "work of art."<sup>6</sup>

21 February

Still at Syracuse. The weather for the last two days has been splendid; but the air still cold. I think of sailing. But for where? Nowhere shall I find the comfort that allows me to work here as I had not been able to do for so many months. Yesterday I finished the third chapter of *Geneviève* and do not yet untangle very well the elements of the chapters that are to follow. In such weather it is not at Gabès, at Tozeur or Nefta that I long to be, it is *elsewhere* and everywhere, wandering, drifting, without ties. . . . It is better to cling to work and not consent to weigh anchor until the rest of my book is more clearly defined. I have always come off badly when yielding to my impatience. And the season is still not very advanced. . . .

A Hollander, a guest like me at the Villa Politi, tells me of his country's indignation over Germany's decision in regard to van der Lubbe.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In all of these examples—the first two are from *Iphigénie*—logic would call for a plural form of the verb.

<sup>6</sup> And at times even falling heavily into rhetoric:

CLYTEM.: *Hélas! je me consume en impuissants efforts,  
Et rentre au trouble affreux dont à peine je sors.  
Mourrai-je tant de fois sans sortir de la vie?*

The character of Clytemnestra, the least good in the tragedy, seems to me, moreover, rather conventional and fabricated from beginning to end. The character of Agamemnon, on the other hand, wonderfully and subtly made up of *bourgeois* tones.

No! *Phèdre*, which I reread immediately afterward, remains incomparably more beautiful. Compared with *Phèdre*, one becomes more aware of that sort of application which, despite its perfection, gives *Iphigénie* somewhat the appearance of a wonderfully successful exercise that remains external to Racine. In *Phèdre* I suddenly feel him committing himself, revealing himself, and involving me with him. What lines! What groups of lines! Was there ever, in any human language, anything more beautiful? [A.]

<sup>7</sup> Condemned by the Nazi government for having burned the Reichstag in February 1933, the young Dutch Communist Marinus van der Lubbe was guillotined at Leipzig on 10 January 1934 and buried without ceremony five days later. His family's request for his body was refused.

Not only was he condemned to death merely by the retroactive effect of laws more recent than his arraignment; but now the Reich also refuses to hand over his body. Holland thinks with bitterness that the request she made for it would have been received less disdainfully if it had come from a power that Germany had been obliged to consider more seriously. The Reich would at least have given some excuse instead of simply overriding and paying no attention to a very legitimate claim. Obviously, it is thought in Holland and elsewhere, the German government is not very anxious for a chemical analysis to be made of the condemned man's organs; and justifiably so.

Here no open fields. The countryside is imprisoned. One walks between high walls; happily fallen down in places, they reveal orchards, almond trees in blossom, orange trees, lemon trees. . . . Is it the need of protecting property, of asserting: this land is mine, not anyone else's? . . .

This little corner of latomy, behind San Giovanni, which still remained wild and into which the pedestrian's glance could plunge as he passed — since I have been here a group of masons has been striving to make it ugly too, under the eye of a boss in a derby hat who, with his hands in his pockets, watches over them all day. And this wall is useless since, on this side, the cliff is abrupt; it merely keeps one from seeing.

By chance there still stretches out, very close to the hotel, an immense vacant space open to all which serves a few vagrants, children flying kites, sometimes a whole group of future priests, more rarely schoolboys between two classes. The rock is deeply concave in spots; it still bears traces of the wheels of Greek chariots, as in the avenue of tombs; and likewise, on the vertical walls, the hollow marking where funerary tablets were. Everywhere that the rock does not break through there are flowers; large asphodels beginning to bloom; white carpets of cardamines, and especially tiny daisies of dazzling whiteness, but which, when evening comes, withdraw into themselves and give themselves up to introspection.

A letter in *Le Temps* (by I have forgotten whom; I should have kept the issue) returns again, and at great length, to the diction of French verse. This correspondent (unknown to me) insists greatly on the question of shorts and longs and takes pleasure in breaking up French alexandrines into iambs, trochees, dactyls, etc. — which, in my opinion, always remains somewhat artificial in dealing with French poetry, where the accent plays a rather weak part free from all laws. I have noticed (am I wrong?) that those who insist so much on the scansion of our verses are almost completely ignorant of foreign lan-

guages. Knowledge of English and German poetry, in which the strong and weak accents have such importance and permit or motivate a precise prosody, would have shown them by contrast the slight role they play in French poetry.<sup>8</sup> Obviously any really living French verse breathes and allows for a possibility of scansion; but there is nothing very arbitrary about it and the poet remains free to place his accents where he wishes. Obviously such an alexandrine as

$\overset{\sim}{L}e \overset{\sim}{j}our \overset{\sim}{n}'est \overset{\sim}{p}as \overset{\sim}{p}lus \overset{\sim}{p}ur \overset{\sim}{q}ue \overset{\sim}{l}e \overset{\sim}{f}ond \overset{\sim}{d}e \overset{\sim}{m}on \overset{\sim}{c}œur$

breaks up easily into three iambs and two anapests. But what a bad actor he would be who made those strong and weak accents felt! And how much better the verse is when it is pronounced in such a way that all the syllables (at least the last five ones of the first half: *jour n'est pas plus pur*) keep almost the same value. I grant that the verse I am citing here is rather exceptional; but, thinking of some other lines and choosing them from among the most famous, I note that in their scansion three elements enter in and have an equal importance: force (intensity of the sound), length (more or less prolonged pause on the syllable), pitch of the sound — by which perhaps the French language makes up for its handicap (lack or weakness of the tonic accent) and which permits of shading the tone so marvelously in our poetry, more subtly, it seems to me, than in poetry in German or English.

The correspondent of *Le Temps* expresses the wish, at the end of his letter, that certain poems will be recorded as recited by their very authors. What a lesson, what a delight to be able to hear *Le Cimetière marin* recited by Valéry! What a regret not to be able to hear *L'Après-*

<sup>8</sup> I note nevertheless that, in many cases, the German poet abandons regular scansion in order to pay attention only to the number of syllables, without worrying about their accent. There is considerable variation here, which is never found in our poetry (classic poetry, for I am naturally not speaking here of "free" verse). I find in the *Second Faust* (I take this at random), side by side, two lines (scene on the upper Peneus), the first of which pays attention only to the accentuation and the second only to the number of syllables, giving full value to a vowel which in the preceding line was almost slurred over (the *i* in words ending in *-tige*).

*Im Wilderwartigen grosse, tüchtige Züge.*

*Ich ahne schon ein günstiges Geschick.*

That is to say that in the first line the anapest twice takes the place of the iamb. The second line remains, it seems to me, almost unscannable (if I may be permitted the expression), or, to keep the pentameter, forces one to give a strong value to an obviously weak syllable (the last one of *günstiges*). Many examples of this might be found, but probably not in the iambic pentameters of Schiller's or Goethe's tragedies, nor in the hexameters of his *Elegies*. [A.]



*midî d'un faune* recited by Mallarmé!<sup>9</sup> (This is the correspondent of *Le Temps* speaking.) As if every great composer had to be likewise the best performer of his works! . . . In any case the author, even when a poor performer, knows how his lines are to be read; and especially how they *are not to be* read. Alas, I believe it is exactly the way they are read at the Comédie-Française! The memory, already distant, I have preserved of the performance of some tragedy or other of Corneille remains painful. The actors' chief concern seemed to be to make one forget that the play was in verse. They broke up, scamped, denatured the alexandrines to the point where only a very expert and highly practiced ear could recognize them or know that they were being mangled. And this on the pretext of being *natural*! At once losing their luster and all their poetic qualities, those verses seemed lamentably or ridiculously artificial; all the sentiments expressed seemed false, the whole play factitious.

To recite our verses it requires great art, of which the tradition is lost. In order to recite them properly today one would have first to feel them properly. Nothing was farther from realism than our theater, and nothing was at the same time more true. It was a miraculous transposition into a very sheltered domain. Today reality presses upon us from all sides and it is the end of the work of art.

I read this same evening in *Le Temps* of the following day an article by Jacques Boulenger, precisely on the diction of verse, which is full of very pertinent, sensitive, competent, and just reflections. Had I read it a few hours earlier, I should not have felt the need of writing any of what precedes. But it seems to me that Boulenger is exaggerating to himself the importance of the tonic accent in our language. At the hotel where I am staying, where I hear many foreigners talking, I note again that French has a much more even delivery than any other. And I should like to ask Boulenger what other language would accept, when poetry is set to music, the concordance of a strong beat with a weak syllable and letting the musical accent happen to fall on the mute E, as in:

"UnE fièvrE brûlante . . ."

of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, or

"Souvent femmE varie . . ."

where the Italian had

"La donna è mObile . . ."<sup>10</sup>

In short, if it is all right to speak of the indispensable accentuation of French verses, it must however be recognized that they have noth-

<sup>9</sup> *The Cemetery by the Sea* and *The Afternoon of a Faun* are two of the most famous poems by Valéry and Mallarmé respectively.

<sup>10</sup> The second example is of course from *Rigoletto*.

ing to do with dactyls, anapests, spondees, etc.; that no rule can be based on their scansion; and that there are glorious ones that launch forth in breach of all metrical systems. What other language than French would tolerate such a succession of weak syllables as, for example, in these wonderful lines of Hugo, where, twice and in perfect symmetry, the first accent in the alexandrine is put off until the sixth syllable (first and third lines quoted):

Comme le souvenir est voisin du remord;  
 Comme à pleurer tout nous ramène,  
 Et que je te sens froide à te toucher, ô mort. . . .<sup>11</sup>

With what embarrassment, going over by chance not the proofs but the definitive pages of Volume VI of my *Œuvres complètes*, which the printer has just run off, I notice, too late alas! an unpardonable slip: I misquoted two lines of Racine that I claim to admire particularly, replacing by a brutal *toi* the timid *vous* that, in the second of the lines, contributes, with its whispered softness, a mysterious and disturbing alliteration:

Et Phèdre au Labyrinthe avec vous descendue  
 Se serait avec vous retrouvée, ou perdue.

How could I have made that mistake, which is so obvious? And now there is no way of correcting it! . . .<sup>12</sup>

Cuverville, 10 March

Spent seven days in Paris; important conversations with those who can enlighten me somewhat about the tragic February days.<sup>13</sup> Incapable, for hours at a time, of thinking of anything else; but no desire to speak of it in this notebook.

<sup>11</sup> See note 18 on p. 302. [A.] These lines are from the poem "*Paroles sur la dune*" ("Words on the Dune"), which figures in *Les Contemplations*.

<sup>12</sup> The error was corrected in the Pléiade edition. See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 302.

<sup>13</sup> The Stavisky financial scandal, involving high political figures and leading to the fall of the Chaumetemps and the Daladier cabinets, in February 1934, rivaled in its repercussions the Panama affair of 1892. After several days of rioting and the ill-timed dismissal of the Paris Prefect of Police, the powerful fascist leagues and the Communists staged a riot outside the Chamber of Deputies on 6 February in which many were killed. Riots and looting continued for days, culminating in a general strike on 12 February. On 21 February, when the Daladier Ministry had yielded to that of M. Doumergue, the mutilated body of the jurist Albert Prince, who may have held the secret of the Stavisky case, was found on the railroad tracks near Dijon. Throughout February the future of the Republic was threatened by French fascist groups.

Bedel, in his *Nouvelle Arcadie*, has sketched a portrait of me in which those who do not know me recognized me at once.<sup>14</sup>

*Manosque, 30 March*

The best thing would be to begin writing in this notebook again as naturally as if I had written in it the day before. Between old friends what is the good of excusing oneself for having gone so long without seeing one another?

That evening (I believe it would not be too hard to find the date again if only I first found my calendar), after an excellent conversation with Martin-Chauffier, at avenue Henri-Martin, I had dined at the tiny restaurant in the Place du Trocadéro where I used to go often a few years ago. I was returning home immediately afterward, somewhat melancholy and with no other plan than to go to bed at once. Place de l'Alma I was preparing to take the 19 bus when I am joined by Domi,<sup>15</sup> back from the Billancourt studio. He has not yet dined, but he intends to amuse himself a bit first. How joyfully I let myself be led toward the Byron in the Champs-Élysées! Both of us are enchanted by Eddie Cantor's *Roman Scandals*. And during the whole show I do not think too much of that little bite I gave to my tongue two days before, as I happen to do from time to time. (I cannot succeed in understanding how I go about it to bite myself like this; once I bit so deeply that I went to the doctor, thinking he would have to sew up or finish cutting off the little piece of flesh I had half detached.) And that evening my tongue remained rather painful; I thought of it again, alone in the taxi taking me back to rue Vaneau after the show: all the same that little wound, however insignificant it may be, but repeated always in the same spot, might eventually give rise to a cancerous growth. . . . One must dare to look upon this coldly. It would begin with a sort of almost painless callus, about which I should not even dare consult the doctor; and when I should finally make up my mind, the doctor might well tell me: too late. Cancer of the tongue is well known; particularly

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<sup>14</sup> *The New Arcadia* (1934) is a satire of parlor communists which describes an experiment in communal living in a French château. The ideological master of the group, the famous writer Chérès, shares certain physical characteristics with André Gide and is probably intended as a caricature of him. ("Although, after literary fame and the caresses it bestows he had sought political fame and the insults it multiplies, although he had subscribed, with considerable noise of publicity, to the ideas for which the Arcadians were crushing their fingers with the hammer and skinning their shins with the sickle, Chérès displayed a lofty detachment in regard to the practices of this new social regime.")

<sup>15</sup> André Gide's nephew, Dominique Drouin.

hard to treat, particularly painful in a brief time, disagreeable for one's friends. If I were sure of it, what should I do?

No, no! I should not have to probe or question myself at length. Should I have the necessary guts? — Yes indeed. . . .

It has already occurred to me two or three times in life to envisage the possibility of suicide; but never, I believe, with so much force and clarity as that evening during the little time between the Champs-Élysées and the rue Vaneau in the taxi that dropped me at my door.

What does this gentleman want of me who is approaching me while I am paying the chauffeur?

"Monsieur Gide?"

I reply with a grunt, but he insists:

"You are Monsieur André Gide, aren't you?"

At this hour of the night in the now deserted street, what can he want of me?

"It is because," he says to me, "the rumor of your suicide has been all over Paris this evening; I am a reporter on *Le Petit Journal* and, like many of my colleagues, I had come to get the details. . . ."

*Nice, 10 April*

Two evenings with Valéry, more charming than ever. And more than ever I admire the resources of his extraordinary intelligence. And what grace, what exquisite amenity in his conversation!

I ask him if the Nice museum is worth a visit. He confesses that he has not seen it; on the other hand, tells me of a remarkable exhibit of Japanese prints. I confess in my turn that that scarcely interests me.

"Yes," he says in agreement, "at our age one is resigned to the masterpieces of others."

*Cabris, 17 April*

On the basis of what do you expect history to be written if not on the basis of documents which, if false, will warp the whole machine and the deductions, conclusions, etc., that depend on it? Truth, historical truth, never imposes itself independently. On the contrary it has this disadvantage, that "believers" imagine that it will always win out in the end and *rely* on that; while the falsifiers *work* to make falsehood win out. This is perhaps what partly explains why falsehood everywhere has the upper hand and wins out so generally. It is also because falsehood is advantageous, flattering, pleasing (at least to the majority), whereas truth always embarrasses and hurts some in some way or other. It has difficulty getting a hearing because it hurts to hear.<sup>16</sup> The good it does is known, or recognized, only afterward.

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<sup>16</sup> A play on words is lost here; the French has: "*Elle a du mal à se faire entendre parce qu'elle fait mal à entendre.*"

Paris, 12 May

For some time I have wanted to reread (or skim through again at least) *Les Paroles d'un croyant*,<sup>17</sup> one of the annunciatory books of my youth. Would Lamennais's call still be addressed to us today? Would his pathetic declamation still find an echo in my heart?

I open the book at random and fall first on these sentences:

"Why do animals find their food each according to his species? This is because none among them steals that of others and each one is satisfied with what satisfies his needs" — sentences that strike me as most unfortunately vulnerable to criticism, like, moreover, all that follows them.

6 June

One would have the right, it seems to me, to sue those who quote falsely. I had a desire to, I recall, in connection with an article by E. C. in *La Grande Revue*; that was long ago. The article was full of praises, moreover; but that does not matter and the trial would only have been more piquant. What E. C. especially praised was my style; he gave a great many examples, and I don't know whether or not he quoted "from memory" as Proust and Maurras do; but the fact remains that out of that quantity of quotations most of them were inexact. Certainly a lack of sensibility, or of intelligence, precedes such a lack of exactness; and what pleasure can there be in being praised by people who quote you wrongly?<sup>18</sup>

Two critics (who do not know one another) congratulate me on having written: "Every creature who has but himself as an end suffers from an abominable ill." Not at all, gentlemen; I said: "suffers from an abominable void," which, all the same, is a bit less flat and signifies a bit more.

Thursday, 12 July

Savet played us some records of Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach. I really enjoyed only those of Bach (one of the Brandenburg Concertos, the third I believe). Beethoven struck me as heavy with rhetoric and redundancy.

Doubtless I was well advised to force myself for a long time to ad-

<sup>17</sup> *Words of a Believer* (1834).

<sup>18</sup> Everything I was saying turns against me after I have just found myself, twice, quoting poetry inaccurately, first Racine, then Hugo. As for Racine's lines, I have already explained myself. I hasten to correct the line from Hugo:

*Et que je te sens froide en te touchant, ô mort,*  
which, through an inexcusable mistake, became:

*Et que je te sens froide à te toucher, ô mort.* [A.]

mire what was presented to me as admirable. My natural penchant carried me toward Chateaubriand; I decided to prefer to him Stendhal, who taught me much more. There is no great advantage in letting oneself go too readily to one's tastes. Real education is the one that takes you into the unfamiliar. But an age comes when it is more important to assert oneself than to educate oneself. What strength he would then have who *pretended* nothing! It is time for me to dare to say everything that it is high time to dare to admit to myself.

14 July

That Russian lady thinks she has conquered me by telling me the tremendous pleasure she has got from my . . . *Symphonie inachevée*!<sup>19</sup> But the book of mine she prefers is my *Faux-Monnayeurs*, which she has reread so often that she almost knows it by heart. Yet from what she says of it, it appears that she is thinking of my *Caves du Vatican*. Thus fame very rarely offers an absolutely smooth bed for our vanity to lie down in.

Karlsbad, 18 July

Finished *Une Page d'Amour*;<sup>20</sup> not unworthy of the series and remarkable despite its almost constant stylistically heavy, slow, and thick passages. Drawn with a blunt pencil. The very subject of the book is very beautiful; howbeit, fundamentally *moral*. Zola must have had great pretensions to morality; one feels here likewise, and a bit too much, artistic and scientific pretensions.

Stendhal, whom I open immediately afterward (*Lucien Leuwen* in the Schiffrin edition), seems fluid, subtle, full of ozone. I note (in the appendix, page 663):

"It was not wit he lacked, but a certain facility in retaining others' ideas and *distorting them by setting them on stilts*." Worth quoting. This is the device of *Le Temps* when stating the Marxist theories.

Wrote a few lines of dialogue in a separate notebook — possibly of use for the comedy, which I shall probably not write.

22 July

Very interesting article by Crépet on the relations between Baudelaire and Mérimée. I did not know the latter's letter that Crépet quotes; in it Mérimée speaks of *Les Fleurs du mal*<sup>21</sup> as of "a very ordinary book, in no wise dangerous, in which there are a few sparks of poetry such as one may find in a poor lad who is ignorant of life and who is

<sup>19</sup> Thinking of *The Pastoral Symphony*, she has called it *The Unfinished Symphony*.

<sup>20</sup> *A Page of Love* by Zola.

<sup>21</sup> Baudelaire's collection of poems, *The Flowers of Evil*.

fed up with it because a girl of easy virtue has deceived him." He adds that he "does not know the author but would be willing to bet he is a respectable simpleton." Crépet explains rather badly, in my opinion, the almost servilely obsequious attitude of Baudelaire in regard to Mérimée, just as in regard to Sainte-Beuve. I see in it rather that *incurable modesty* that I pointed out likewise in Dostoyevsky and that I understand only too well. Nothing more sincere, in one as in the other; whereby both were so secretly accessible to the Christian feeling despite all the resistance of their very legitimate pride. It was in the very excess of their modesty, since both were rich with that antagonism, that their pride sated itself; it never occurs to them that anything is *due them*; they beg. Each of them feels he is in dreadful need.

A letter from Louis Gérin that grieves me; I tear it up at once. If, later on, it were found, it would cover both of us with ridicule. How can I make him understand and feel that nothing is more unpleasant to me than the sort of cult he pays me? I come to hope that his adoration is simulated and, in return, I am going to be obliged to simulate coldness. It's a pity for him; I warned him sufficiently. It is he who puts distance between us, or rather who forces me to stay at a distance, for I cannot endure incense.

Perhaps some day he will read these lines. I am writing them to enlighten him.

For more than a week I have been going about bareheaded, according to the very pleasant custom of Karlovy Vary,<sup>22</sup> favored by the shady trees hereabout; very exactly since the day when I bought myself a marvellous and irresistible Anglo-Tyrolia n headdress I didn't need at all, which remains in my cupboard. I wore a hat only one evening, to go into a synagogue to hear a very beautiful concert; I had to borrow a hat at the entrance, a rather filthy one that stuck to my head. "*Vergessen Sie nicht es wiederzubringen*,"<sup>23</sup> I was told. Never fear!

Heard the rather stirring sermon of a great rabbi (?) on this theme: "*Ein Gott, ein Volk, ein Land*." Yes, this theme is rather stirring, so long as it remains in the mystical domain. But hateful by reason of the exclusivity it involves. "*Kein Gott, kein Volk, kein Land*"<sup>24</sup> is the still Utopian program that tomorrow may save the world and to which I subscribe already.

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<sup>22</sup> The Czech name for Karlsbad.

<sup>23</sup> "Do not forget to bring it back."

<sup>24</sup> Gide has turned into the negative the formula: "One God, one people, one country."

23 July

These are the very doctrines of Barrès that are flourishing in Germany today. I have been pointing out their dangers for some time.<sup>25</sup> And it is no good saying that Hitlerism exaggerates them to the point of absurdity or that these doctrines, good for France, are bad for other countries. They must necessarily lead to this as soon as they cease to encounter a sufficient opposition, as soon as they overcome that opposition. Barrès's followers of yesterday are ungracious not to recognize this, and have lost all right to blame in this case what they wanted to see happen in France. I do not even know whether or not I was well advised to write that those doctrines could, in their time, be useful to our country, so dangerous may become the prejudice they inculcate. Did not Barrès likewise constitute himself the apologist of a certain expedient justice that Hitler is preaching today? And was it not easy to foresee that those fine theories, as soon as someone else got hold of them, might turn against us?

Has Hitler ever promulgated anything more revolting than what Barrès teaches his son, when speaking of his governess: that Germans have no soul? This apparently amounts to saying that one can kill them without scruples. I do not want to give any importance to a paradox and pretend not to understand what Barrès meant by that. But, at the age he then was and however intelligent he may have been, was little Philippe in a position to understand it? Did not such words run the risk of forcing that young mind into revolt? — against his governess perhaps; or against his father, which would have been much better.

24 July

Concern for "what people will think of it" has never much stood in my way. Though it was often very painful for me to sadden some for whom I had the keenest affection, I was always able to override this, judging that considerations of the heart must not sway the reason. But here it is a question of not disappointing the hopes that desperate creatures have laid in me. How could I fail to take into account the sympathies that my declarations have brought me? Yet to consider only the extremity of my thoughts, to offer only their point, is a way of betraying those thoughts; I cannot. I hold that one always finds a secret advantage in remaining utterly sincere were that sincerity, in the beginning, to play into the hands of the enemy.

In any profound confession there is more eloquence and instruction than one might think at first. It is dishonest to overrate oneself. Even

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<sup>25</sup> Notably in the now famous *Ermitage* review in 1897 of Barrès's *Déracinés* (*The Uprooted*), later republished in *Pretexts*, and the essay on *Nationalism and Literature* (1909). See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 149; Vol. II, pp. 244, 248, 346, and 353.



of heroes and saints, it is useless, it is dishonest, to reveal only the bust, to present an affected image. Even the saints, even the boldest heroes have known hours of weakness, of relapse, and of doubt. The important thing is that they overcame them. The sight of their very stumblings teaches us. There is some encouragement for weaker men in seeing that those heroes were, despite everything, only men, subject to the same weaknesses as we; and, on the other hand, that in spite of many weaknesses man can make himself a hero.

Finally, those objections, those reticences, which adversaries might bring up against me — is it not preferable to show that I knew them by myself and that I have already replied to them? that my present conviction is not the result of blindness? And does not that conviction come out all the stronger because it has managed to overcome everything that would weaken it? . . . But the point of arrival is the only thing that matters to them, not the slow and cautious development of the thought, which nevertheless gives it, subsequently, its assurance.

25 July

It is good to have doubted everything afresh and to stand on a thoroughly clean earth. But in order to start out anew. Shall I be able to do so myself? Have I still enough strength today? The young people who come to me distinctly feel that I should like to delegate to them all my powers. For a long time it can no longer be a question of works of art. In order to listen to new, indistinct chords one must not be deafened by moans. There is almost nothing left in me that does not sympathize. Wherever I turn my eyes, I see nothing but distress around me. Whoever remains contemplative today gives evidence of an inhuman philosophy, or a monstrous blindness.

How cleverly my laziness puts forward all these fine sentiments! A flattering shelter that would be upset at once by a new burst of health.

It is not becoming to lay to virtue the weariness of old age. The table of successive renunciations would not lack eloquence, if one could get oneself to make such admissions without self-indulgence.

26 July

That Communism is to be outdistanced may be. But first of all it must be achieved. The "beyond" will come along later. . . .

27 July

"The effort may be badly directed," X. tells me. "It is essential to head at once toward one's end without first steering toward off-course ports of call."

Why do they speak of lost spirituality? But a spirituality that would not be deceitful and that the reason would not have to disown at once. . . .

28 July

I open at random the volume of Goethe that Dr. L. has just lent me, and in the *Sprüche in Prosa* I fall at once on these words (*Siebente Abteilung*): "*Der lebendige begabte Geist, sich in praktischer Absicht an's Allernächste haltend, ist das Vorzüglichste auf Erden*";<sup>28</sup> which is rather hard to translate. I fear giving them a too personal interpretation if I see in these words an approbation of my recent conduct. And yet isn't that what Goethe meant? Although the spiritualists are quite ready to maintain that the thing nearest to us is our guardian angel. Let us leave them to their arguments and not try to be more "spiritual" than we are naturally.

Is it merely playing on words to write: every *dominant* can become a *key-note* by a simpler modulation than it would require to become the *leading note*.

29 July

To substitute, every time one can, the "how?" for the "why?" amounts to taking a great step toward wisdom. In spite of everything, a secret bond links the two questions. Mystics are concerned only with the latter and the end alone matters to them; naturalists consent only to the first; it alone leads to a pertinent reply, which the study of Nature is always ready to supply; it alone permits some progress. The pursuit of "final causes" claims to put the cart before the horse.

30 July

Dragged about all day long. General discomfort; upset. Excellent conversation (and of great advantage to me) with Stoisy Sternheim. Toward evening the weather clears up; I likewise.

31 July

*Preoccupation* . . . wonderful word. The work of art can germinate, grow, and blossom only in an un-preoccupied mind.

I am grieved not to be able to put my hand on a very beautiful and moving letter from young Trystram, to which I just happened to want to reply; and I do not even know whether or not I can find his address in Paris.

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<sup>28</sup> "The vital, gifted spirit that for a practical purpose holds to the immediate task is the most excellent thing on earth."

The idea of an immediate death, always possible, pursues me (but without any anguish whatever); that is what makes me write the above lines, as a sort of message for young T., whom I have forgotten how to reach.

I wrote, in the past: "It is a duty to be happy." I still think it perhaps, but this duty becomes more difficult for me daily.

1 August

The young Czech Communist who comes to see me congratulates me on certain pages of *Prétextes* (*Nationalisme et littérature*, concerning Ricardo's theories<sup>27</sup>) which, he says, "are impregnated with a pure Marxist spirit." — So much the better! So be it! But, I beg of you, if I am a Marxist, let me be so without knowing it.

#### FOR A PREFACE

Companion of your solitude, young man who will read me later on, it is to you that I address myself. I should like you to derive from my writings strength, courage, and awareness; and scorn for false virtues. Do not sacrifice to idols.

2 August

I read in an article by Mauriac (*Le Temps* of 31 July), otherwise very good and well-intentioned: "Gide has written, I believe, that if he had been prevented from writing books, he would have killed himself." I never said that, and even less wrote it. Mauriac read it in a newspaper and repeats it in a newspaper, and that pretentiously absurd sentence will, thanks to the newspapers, be more read and commented upon than any of my books, as almost always happens with false quotations, which, like counterfeit coins, "drive out the good ones." New, excellent (and lamentable) example of the baneful present-day preponderance of the newspaper.

I note this out of great fear of having later on to assume paternity for that bombastic remark.

3 August

Concerning his relations with his wife, X. used to say: "By dint of silence we have almost got to the point of understanding each other."

Prague, 5 August

Very strange city; made somewhat ugly by non-indigenous contributions, a sort of American or Sovietic modernism: signs, advertisements. After the elegance and luxury of the Karlsbad shops, the ugly-

<sup>27</sup> The essay "Nationalism and Literature" first appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1909 and was reprinted in *Further Pretexts* in 1911.

ness and poverty of the shop windows surprises; but what a large number of bookshops, and so well supplied! Wonderful appearance of the city, the first day, in the rain. Glorious, painful, and tragic city; widely spread out in time and space; a sort of mystical vehemence keeps it in motion and stirs it up.

Despite the bad weather, the animation of the boulevard where our hotel is, at night. Mute gathering of a crowd around an unfortunate news-dealer who is weeping, in a recess of a wall, turning his back to life, his face hidden in his upraised arm, a picture of the blackest despair. That other one who lifts a metal grille to recover a still lighted cigarette butt that a passer-by has just thrown away.

Read during the long trip Goethe's wonderful *Clavijo*,<sup>28</sup> which I am both inexcusable and happy not to have known before. Considerable æsthetic, psychological, and moral interest; of great educative value.

People should be taught to read. Not to read aloud; but rather to oneself. If the school of the Vieux-Colombier<sup>29</sup> were still open, how willingly I should give a course in reading! I imagine a cycle of six lectures. I should choose, for instance, Baudelaire. I should explain his love of the Sonnet. (Limited space to fill, which forbids successive "inspirations.")

*Des hommes dont le corps est mince et vigoureux*

*Et des femmes dont l'œil par sa franchise étonne.*<sup>30</sup>

I should point out the role of *amazement* in a poem by Baudelaire. The (artistic) amazement in this case comes from the fact that Baudelaire considers of man only the body and of women (in this case) only the moral quality.

11 August

Platen's *Tagebücher*<sup>31</sup> has a rather engaging quality of style. But what have I to do with the querulous?

I launch, with Stoisy, into the *Räuber*.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, absurdity in pathos

<sup>28</sup> A tragedy (1794) based on the life of the Spanish writer Clavijo.

<sup>29</sup> Almost as soon as he had established the revolutionary Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in 1913, Jacques Copeau, seconded by Gide and his friends of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, set up in conjunction with it a school for actors.

<sup>30</sup> "Men with slim, vigorous bodies

And women with amazingly frank eyes."

These lines are from the poem "*Parfum exotique*" ("Exotic Perfume").

<sup>31</sup> August Platen's *Tagebücher* (*Journals*) were published posthumously in 1896-1900.

<sup>32</sup> *The Robbers*, a tragedy in five acts by Schiller.

and lack of moderation could go no further; and this without even the excuse of verse. But how representative it is! It is probably natural to Hitler's people to feel at home in the frantic.

15 August

That wound one must not allow to heal over, but which must always remain open and painful, that wound inflicted by contact with frightful reality.

Ascona, 16 August

Wonderful hotel of the Monte Verità. Room so quiet that I immediately have a taste for work again. I share it with Robert Levesque, who respects my desire for silence and meditation. But this morning, entirely concerned with bringing my correspondence up to date.

One is so wonderfully comfortable here that I shall not allow myself to stay more than a few days; just time enough to relax my nerves and to learn how to sleep again. Ah, if only I had deserved this well-being by my work! This is the way I want the places of rest and convalescence in the south of the U.S.S.R. to be, this is perhaps the way they are.

A little more light and air in my thoughts. But I dare not yet yield to joy — which, nevertheless, would be so natural to me here.

17 August

. . . and already my weakened senses carry a bit less far desires that are a bit less nimble.

18 August

Am I still capable of completing a new work? I ought not even to raise that question. But, around me and within me, I feel so few permissions, I see so many obstacles rise up! My self-confidence is so limited! The weight to be set in motion seems to me in advance so heavy! My strength so out of proportion to what I should like to undertake! And, ahead of me, the time so short!

Yet I know from experience, and I go about repeating to myself, that the triumph in art is achieved only through a series of successive slight victories. Only the second-rate is easy. I must struggle above all against this new enemy: impatience.

Here everything bathes in a splendid azure, as at the time of my *Nourritures*. If I did not constantly repeat to myself (and why?) that I am old, I should barely feel my age. Perhaps curiosity lures me somewhat less and dawns seem to me less surprising. To the finest sunrises I say: "Oh, let me sleep!" The world still has its charm, but those rights over everything that I used to grant myself I am less inclined to recog-

nize now that I know those with whom I share them to be so few. Moreover this is not a matter of age. I remain much more *moral* than I should like.

19 August

In *Le Temps* of the 18th, as an appendix to the already very interesting article by J. M. Goblet on "Armenia as a Soviet Republic," a letter signed B. Nikitine still insists on the character at once national and Bolshevik in tendency of the Armenian state. This is very important to me. I have the hope that it will soon appear that the opposition created between certain notions is artificial and that it is possible to be patriotic and internationalist at one and the same time, just as it is possible to be an individualist and a Communist-sympathizer at one and the same time. A workman in the U.S.S.R. can be proud of his factory, of his team, without in any way wanting to crush those next door, who are likewise working for the common cause. Rivalry melts into emulation, for the greater advantage of all.

When the nationalists in our country work to make France hateful to, because hating, the people of other nations, it is as a Frenchman that I suffer. I should like a noble, likable, generous France and am ill convinced that a politic inspired by noble sentiments would necessarily be that of a dupe. Less bitter, less vindictive, the Versailles Treaty would have been more clever and all Europe would suffer less from it today. Each state is now bound to the niggardly interests that then prevailed and the cruel consequence of an initial mistake was having to persist in it. It is in the name of honor (of false honor) that one gives oneself away. No one ever gives himself away so thoroughly as he who makes it a point of honor to give himself away.

Arona, 20 August

We had taken tickets, on the boat, for Stresa; then, driven off by the look of the palatial hotels, went on to the end of the lake,<sup>33</sup> whence we shall reach Nice this very evening. This morning, early, we go through the market, spread out along the quays, in the streets, on the squares. Wonderful displays of fruits, eggplants, tomatoes, peaches, and above all green, red, gilded peppers, enormous, gleaming, and so odd in appearance that I am embarrassed not to find anything more to say of them.

Nice, 21 August

This young Austrian whom R. L. introduces to me, "*arbeitslos*"<sup>34</sup> like so many others and who, for the past eighteen months, has been

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<sup>33</sup> Lago Maggiore.

<sup>34</sup> Unemployed.

traveling through all the countries in Europe on foot, speaks to us, contrary to what others had told me previously, of the peculiar kindness of the French. It is they, he asserts, who are most charitable when, in an auto, they meet a pedestrian on the road. Ah, how patriotic I feel at once if the French deserve such praise (given most certainly without any desire to win my good graces)! I remain as anxious as possible of the good reputation of our country, wanting it to deserve to be loved, esteemed, admired by all, desirous of contributing to this with all my strength.

*Bormes, 26 August*

Two little girls pass near the bench where I am seated reading J.-R. Bloch's wise reflections in the latest issue of *Europe*.

The elder (eleven years old) to her little sister of six:

"You know that Mamma doesn't want you to answer me back . . . idiot."

". . . a Lafayette insipid in body and mind, in face and soul, cited out of season for alleged little battles in America," says the Prince de Ligne (Vol. I, p. 304) with perhaps a bit of military irritation; but how comforting it is for artists to be able to be judged directly by their works and not according to a reputation so often distorted.

*3 o'clock in the morning*

The flagstones of the terrace, on the same level as the room in which I sleep, remained warm from the heat of the day. Opposite me, and I could see it from my bed, the constellation of Orion, one of the few I know, with his belt extraordinarily distinct, for the full moon at the zenith drowns with its milky brightness the too great number of lesser stars.

*People improve on acquaintance.*

Insist upon and develop this formula which has so much to teach us. — Applied to the "Know thyself." The Christian who notes that, altogether, and after examining himself thoroughly, he "improves on acquaintance" — and the "good Lord," who, alone, loses in the exchange.

*1 September*

That feeling of historical duration which I lacked almost completely (without knowing that I lacked it; and moreover Mallarmé's influence and that of German philosophy finished pushing me in that direction to which my antihistorical nature already inclined me; we claimed to work in the absolute; there was also in this a reaction against Taine's theories, etc.). Fernandez eventually opened my eyes on this subject. So that, for about two years now, reacting against myself, I take care to situate and anchor my thoughts in time. Review of all literary values.

The verb *chelinguer* (which I wrote: *chlinguer*) is used by Zola (*L'Assommoir*, Vol. I, p. 182): "I can't help saying so," he [Coupeau] murmured, "but your shirt certainly stinks!"<sup>35</sup>

*Cuverville, 10 September*

"In order to philosophize properly, one must make up one's mind once in life to cast off all one's opinions, though there may be some among them that may be true, in order to resume them later on one by one and to admit only those that are indubitable." (Descartes: *Sur la 7<sup>e</sup> objection*, Abr. des Obj., vii.<sup>36</sup>)

*13 September*

Extremely (and I am almost on the point of saying: deplorably) open to sympathy, I let my mind be held in check, during the war, on a natural slope that would have taken it very far and was unable to put up any resistance (I reproach myself with it sufficiently today) to the rash enthusiasms of the friends who surrounded me at that time. At the Van Rysselberghes', in the constant company of Verhaeren, of Copeau, of Ghéon, of Schlumberger, of Vincent d'Indy, without exactly following their example, I did not have the force to protest. At least I considered it prudent to keep silent and gave all my time and almost all my thoughts to the work of the refugees with which I could busy myself without compromise. Invited to one of our dinners, my Uncle Charles Gide, who had in no way given up his freedom of thought, was amazed by the excess of our chauvinism (I say *our*, for I let myself be swept along); he could hardly risk a few reflections designed to moderate us, instantly jumped upon from all sides. "If he had gone on, I should have thrown my plate at his head," declared Ghéon immediately afterward. Must I regret not having been able, not having dared, at that time, to take a stand, to resist the influence? No, yielding to it myself allowed me to know it better and, consequently, allows me today to judge it—severely—and puts me better on my guard against it.

*Cuverville, 19 September*

Many newspapers have reproduced the declarations of M. Georges Bonnet on his return from the U.S.S.R. One sentence of his "travel im-

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<sup>35</sup> *Chelinguer* is the vulgar equivalent of "to stink." In *L'Assommoir* (or *The Dram Shop* as it is sometimes called in English) Zola consistently portrays crude people.

<sup>36</sup> Descartes's *Metaphysical Meditations* are generally printed with a long appendix containing the *Objections* of contemporary theologians and philosophers such as Father Mersenne, Hobbes, Arnauld, and Gassendy. It is from Descartes's reply to the seventh objection that Gide is quoting.



pressions" allows me to understand better the confusion that usually arises concerning individualism. "The difficulty," says M. Bonnet, "has come from the peasants who have remained very *individualistic*. . . ." No doubt of it: Communism is against that kind of individualism and must fight it. But that bitter anti-interdependence of the peasants is but the caricature of real individualism, just as superstition is but the caricature of true religious feeling. One cannot be judged according to the other.

Obviously I suffer from the refusal of some. Yes, that obstination in refusal, the intentional lack of understanding, the hatred, is often extremely painful to me. But, on the whole, I *receive* much more than I had ever hoped. I readily convinced myself, when I was young, that I should not know any fame during my lifetime, that I should be discovered only later on, that my real readers were not yet born; on the other hand, I was absolutely certain of the value of my writings. I still have that self-confidence, that slight desire for immediate success; and the stir that some make about my name hardly does more than embarrass me. I have never longed for the success of an Anatole France, of a Barrès; the posthumous fame of Baudelaire, of Keats, of Nietzsche, of Leopardi is what I wanted, the only one that seemed to me really beautiful and worthy of envy. There is a misunderstanding in any popular acclaim (at least so long as the mass continues to be what it now is), something slightly adulterated with which I cannot be satisfied.

Obviously I suffer from the injustice of certain accusations. But were they deserved, I should suffer much more from them.

*Cuverville, 1 October*

I have forsaken this notebook, my mind occupied by that play (without a title yet) of which I have finished sketching out the first act.<sup>37</sup>

Read *La Fortune des Rougon*; reread *L'Assommoir*.<sup>38</sup>

I should like to write an article on Zola, in which to protest (but gently) against the present lack of appreciation of his value. I should like to bring out in it that my admiration for Zola is not recent and is in no wise inspired by my present "opinions" (simply those opinions allow me to gauge his importance better today); bring out that: barely out of school and in the midst of the Mallarmé circle, Pierre Louÿs used to recite to me, jumbled together with groups of lines from Hugo's

<sup>37</sup> Probably *Robert ou l'Intérêt général* (*Robert or the Common Weal*), which was not published until 1944-5.

<sup>38</sup> *The Fortune of the Rougons* and *Assommoir* are both novels by Zola belonging to the series entitled *The Rougon-Macquarts*.

*Le Satyre*, long passages from *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*<sup>39</sup> (among others) and inculcated in me his youthful admiration. For several years I have reread each summer several volumes of *Les Rougon-Macquart* in order to convince myself anew that Zola deserves to be placed very high — as an artist and without any concern for “tendency.”

My predilection, immediately after *Germinal*, goes to *Pot-Bouille*.

Reread with the greatest advantage *Le Discours de la méthode*.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Abbé Mouret's Transgression* is another of the novels of *The Rougon-Macquarts*.

<sup>40</sup> *Germinal* has the same title in English; both it and *Piping Hot* belong to the same series. *The Discourse on Method* is by Descartes.

Monday, 4 March

To my old housekeeper:

"Well, Eugénie, did you have a good Sunday? Did you go to Mass?"

"Yes."

"In the morning and then in the evening again?"

"Oh, no, only in the morning. You know, I am not churchy. But you have to stay on the right side. You never know what might happen. I remember at the convent, when I was young . . . Monsieur knows that I was raised in the convent. . . . Well, one day, after Mass, I approached the Mother Superior and asked her: 'All the same, Mother . . . if the Good Lord did not exist . . . ?' Then she took me by the arm and: 'My child, we would not be caught the worst.'"

8 March

I feel today, seriously, painfully, that *inferiority* — of never having had to earn my bread, of never having had to work to keep body and soul together. But I have always had such a great love of work that that would probably not have diminished my happiness. Besides, that is not what I mean. But a time will come when this will be looked upon as a deficiency. There is something in it for which the richest imagination cannot provide a substitute, a certain kind of profound education that nothing, later on, can replace. A time is coming when the bourgeois will feel in a state of inferiority when compared with the mere workman. This time has already come for some.

Tangier to Fez, 23 March

If I did not constantly remind myself of my age, certainly I should scarcely be aware of it. And even repeating to myself, like a lesson one has trouble learning *by heart*: I am over sixty-five, I find it hard to convince myself and succeed only in persuading myself of this: that the space is narrow where my desires and my joy, my virtues and my will, can still hope to stretch out. They have never been more demanding.

Jef Last, who, beside me, is reading my *Nourritures terrestres*, makes me feel how wrong I was to write that I had favored "all the vices" in me. That is false; there is, in that declaration, a certain amount of defiance and bragging. For I cannot consent to call vice a penchant and tastes that were natural to me. From everything that procures an artificial intoxication, from everything that adulterates, depraves, and corrupts nature, I have always turned savagely away. And it is doubtless to this that I owe feeling younger today than I felt at twenty.

24 March

Jef Last is of the opinion that Ménéalque's tale stands out as a blemish and mars my *Nourritures*. He is right. It is a bit that was added afterward; I wrote it, I recall, at Saint-Moritz, without interruption, to answer the request of Ducoté, who wanted to see me open the new series of *L'Ermitage*, of which he had just taken over the editorship.<sup>1</sup> It is there that this tale appeared, rather different in ethics from the already written pages of the *Nourritures*, which seemed to me too fragmentary for me to consent to release them at once. (Likewise *La Ronde de la grenade* appeared in the second number of *Le Centaure*; all the rest remained unpublished.<sup>2</sup>)

Jef Last finds fault with Ménéalque's ethics. He is right. I too disapprove of it and, even at that time, presenting it only with reservations, took care to ascribe it to someone else. This is true; but my partial disapproval remains almost imperceptible and the slight irony I thought I was putting into certain sentences ("the pictures that my knowledge of painting allowed me to acquire at a very low price") is not sufficiently marked. The figure of Ménéalque is better drawn in *L'Immoraliste*. Here, in *Les Nourritures*, being confused with mine in certain regards, it might distort my intention and infringes on what remains most valuable in the work: the apology of destitution. I felt this so keenly that I tried to return to that intention in various assertions of Ménéalque along the way: "my heart has remained poor," etc. — but which today strike me as comparable to those sophistries by which some rich people, who want to remain Christians, try to enlarge slightly the eye of the needle, whereby, without losing any of their wealth, to enter all the same "the kingdom of God."

I have not been able to find, in order to include it in my *Œuvres complètes*, the little poem in prose that I wrote, I recall, at La Flèche when I used to go there to meet my brother-in-law,<sup>3</sup> then professor at the Prytanée. This poem appeared, I believe, in a little review of the period, but I have forgotten which one. I liked it very much although

<sup>1</sup> *L'Ermitage*, a monthly literary review, had existed since 1890, but it assumed new significance when Édouard Ducoté took its editorship in 1897 and secured contributors such as Claudel, Copeau, Gide, Gourmont, Jammes, etc. The *Récit de Ménéalque*, later incorporated into Book IV of the *Nourritures terrestres*, appeared in the first issue under Ducoté.

<sup>2</sup> In *If It Die* . . . Gide tells that he wrote *The Round of the Pomegranate* "without any other pretension than a more supple obedience to the inner rhythm" at a time when he had the idea of, but had not written, *The Fruits of the Earth*. After its publication in the short-lived *Centaure*, edited by Pierre Louÿs, it too became part of Book IV.

<sup>3</sup> Marcel Drouin.

Marcel Drouin criticized the first sentence, in which he saw an annoying hypallage (?), which I nevertheless defended because it did not shock me; on the contrary; and I used to go about repeating that sentence aloud, for its rhythm and sinuosity delighted me.

"Cold on my hands, but warm for them, I feel, ah! in that brownish water, those living happy roots." I still like it and enjoy transcribing it here. Perhaps the rest will be found some day.<sup>4</sup>

It is of no use struggling against what may seem to me (and quite wrongly, no doubt) an unjustified servitude: rhythm dominates my sentence, almost dictates it, clings closely to my thought. This need of a precise rhythm responds to a secret exigence. The scansion of the sentence, the placing of the syllables, both strong and weak, all this matters to me as much as the thought itself, and the thought strikes me as halting or distorted if it lacks a foot or has one too many. Thus it is that thought is worth nothing to me unless it participates in life, unless it breathes, becomes animate, and one feels, through the words and in their swelling, a heart beating.

I tell myself, later on, that there is nothing in this but a somewhat indulgent illusion, that there is no reason to wish thought to be *stirred by emotion*, that I am compromising it by urging it to share in the tremblings and weaknesses of the flesh. An illusion? What does that matter to me if I make the readers share it?

Abstract thought is frozen; and I have never been able to do anything with what remains cold. It compromises itself by warming up and becoming human, but it takes on life; only then can it become active.

28 March

. . . But the vast majority of men put up very well with their poverty, do not suffer from it and are not even aware of it. Whoever tried to shake them up and disgust them with their sordid apathy would run the risk of playing the useless role of the agitated agitator of *Paludes*.<sup>5</sup> By transferring the unrest of that book from the moral to the social plane I believe I should only have limited it. But it is easy to make that transfer in imagination. Fundamentally the unrest would remain the same. Fine function to assume: that of *disseminator of unrest*.

With this so imperfect world, which could be so beautiful, shame on him who is satisfied! The *so be it*, as soon as it favors a default, is impious.

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<sup>4</sup> See page 207.

<sup>5</sup> The unnamed protagonist of Gide's *Morasses* (1895) strives to spread unrest and to stir his friends from their passive acceptance of a humdrum life.

Theories of the right easily seem much more reasonable than adverse theories; just as people in a drawing-room are better dressed and seem more respectable than those in the antichamber or the hallway.

Of the arguments exchanged in favor of those theories, those of the right have a tried fiduciary value; the others, which attempt to accredit new truths, have no recognized value. Truths of a political and social nature are not generally accepted before having proved themselves, so that the credit granted them always comes after the event.

Fez, April

Oh, how far from central each of us can feel here! In every instant a whole eternity tarries; the exuberance of spring does not manage to hide death.

It is not enough to say: "Everything that is young is tender." What it is important to note first is that every seed is hard, from which springs the young tender shoot. Every seed must be hard.

Was Balzac aware of the comic aspect of this, which is worthy of our best humorists?

"Ah, there you are," said Mme du Val Noble, "it is the story of the herring, the greatest schemer among fish."

"Why?"

"Well, no one has ever been able to find out."

20 April

Arrived at Algeciras yesterday, Good Friday; considerably worn down by the inflammation of the ear that I have been dragging about for the last six days. Not at all sure that I am doing the necessary to get rid of it. Today noticeable aggravation. Incapable of reading, of writing, of walking, I spend almost the whole day stretched out on my bed, a prey to pain. To what a degree suffering turns the creature in upon himself. . . .

Cuverville, 14 May

Finished yesterday rereading the long succession of novels including *Les Illusions perdues*, *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, and *La Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin*, that Saint-Gothard of the *Comédie humaine*,<sup>6</sup> in which Balzac produces at one and the same time his best and his worst; incomparable in the excellent but far below Zola

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<sup>6</sup> *Lost Illusions*, *Scenes from a Courtesan's Life*, and *The Last Incarnation of Vautrin* are among the most famous novels of Balzac's *Human Comedy*.

in the bad, and precisely where Zola would have excelled. Just like Hugo, Balzac has too much confidence in his genius; often, harassed most likely by need, he works perfunctorily. The excellent interrogations of Vautrin and of Lucien de Rubempré, in which Camusot's professional conscience and his vanity as examining magistrate stifle his interests, stand side by side with the most awkward bits, the most conventionally undistinguished or the falsest and thickest passages; in the conversation between the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and Mme Camusot:

"In all my life I have never written to anyone but that unfortunate Lucien. . . . I shall keep his letters until my death! My dear child, they are fire; sometimes one needs just that."

"What if they were found?" said Mme Camusot with a little gesture of shocked modesty.

"Oh, I should say they are letters in a novel I had begun. For I have copied out everything, my dear, and burned the originals!"

"Oh, madame, as a reward, let me read them! . . ."

"Perhaps," said the Duchesse. "You will see then, my dear, that no one ever wrote anything like them to Léontine!"

And to make it thicker Balzac cannot keep from adding naïvely:

"This last remark was woman herself, woman of all times and all countries." For he is never sublime in a naïve way, never less sublime than when, in a naïve way, he thinks he is.

"Old Goriot was sublime," he thinks he has to add, for fear that the reader may not feel it himself, after one of the less good speeches of the old man (p. 146, former Michel Lévy edition). He thinks he is sublime when he writes, as Hugo would have done: "These two men [Attorney General Grandville and Vautrin], CRIME and JUSTICE, eyed one another" — and the execrable dialogue that follows.

But, despite everything, and like Hugo, how many reasons he gives us for admiring him! And how can one fail to understand that his very shortcomings are also a part of his greatness; that, more perfect, he would not be so gigantic!

Probably Balzac is right when he writes: "*Il me taonne avec le respect*," where we should write: *tanne*.<sup>7</sup> Yet I read in Littré: "It is said that *tanner*, to irritate or to bore, stood for *taonner*, to sting like a horse-fly (*taon*). But the history of the word completely rejects that idea."

*Exclusivité*; was this word, so common today, created by Balzac? He writes:

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<sup>7</sup> "He bores me with his respect." The two words are pronounced identically.

"She [Esther] had loved Lucien for six years as actresses and courtesans do who, wallowing in mud and impurity, thirst for the nobility and devotion of true love and at such times practice its *exclusivity* (is it not necessary to forge a word in order to express an idea so little practiced?)." . . .

Too much time devoted to, too much pleasure taken in, reading, as almost always when I am here and consequently cut off from work. Slowly and studiously I am making progress in *L'Histoire sincère de la nation française* by Seignobos (almost finished).<sup>8</sup> I have defended this title against those who attacked it in my presence, for I clearly see what it means; but it is better to confess that I do not much like it. It seems to me to contain at one and the same time a good mark for the picture the author portrays and a tacit reproach directed at other historians. But this does not keep the book from being excellent, and most instructive (for me at least).

Aloud, and with no less keen admiration, reread (in German) Goethe's *Clavigo*, which I read last summer at Karlsbad with Stoisy Sternheim.

Much Hugo (particularly from *Dieu* and *La Fin de Satan*).<sup>9</sup> Nowhere has French prosody achieved such mastery; but after that amazing gallop Pegasus remains foundered for a long time, and the reader — dazed, intoxicated, and dizzy — has some trouble recovering his common sense and equilibrium.

*And Chaos fell silent in the dazzled abyss.*<sup>10</sup>

Read and reread much Sainte-Beuve. I take pleasure in copying here:

"It is objected: But there are many absurdities, many inapplicable ideas in Jean-Jacques and contrary to the inclinations of human nature. And I answer: The paradoxes of the eighteenth century did more for the advancement of the species than did the magnificent commonplaces of the seventeenth. Men had to jostle routine violently to get out of it. You speak to me of Bourdaloue and his clever moral descriptions. Well, all things considered, Rousseau contains infinitely fewer absurdities than Bourdaloue with his sermons in three points and the exaggerated subtleties he deduces from so-called sacred texts. Ethics had to be *un-sheathed* from all that artificial veneer: whence a certain amount of

<sup>8</sup> *A History of the French People* by Charles Seignobos is written from a liberal point of view that stresses social movements. The English edition has dropped the word *sincere* from the title.

<sup>9</sup> *God* and *The End of Satan* are both long philosophic poems.

<sup>10</sup> "*Et le chaos se tut dans le gouffre ébloui*" is a line from the first part of Hugo's *La Fin de Satan*, terminating a dialogue in which the Deluge offers the world to unwilling Chaos.



breakage." (*"De la connaissance de l'homme au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,"* in *Nouveaux Lundis*, III, note.<sup>11</sup>)

20 May

Man will not become truly great so long as he perches on stilts.

For Roger M. du G.:

If I am interested in two-headed calves (as you say), this is because they help me to understand why those that have only one make such bad use of it.

Hossegor, 29 May

Some are amazed (and, if they feel some affection for me, are grieved) by the "confessions" they read in the extracts from my *Journal* that were published in the *N.R.F.* for May.<sup>12</sup> Thierry Maulnier, in *L'Action française*, goes so far as to declare "without precedent" that recognition on the part of a writer of a dwindling of his creative faculties. It would seem, according to him, that the vanity of writers is so great that they prefer to leave it to critics and readers to notice this; and, in any case, if they happen to become aware of it, they immediately take great care to hide the horror of that realization. But to me it just happens that that realization has nothing horrible about it; it seems to me quite natural to grow old and I am no more ashamed of it than I should be of disappearing. I believe that in the sincerity of an admission there is more eloquence and more to be learned than in the cleverest pretenses of eloquence. My journal is full of such admissions. Nothing seems to me more useless, more absurd, than to overrate oneself; I like a portrait if it is lifelike, not if it flatters me. Moreover I recognize that I should perhaps not be so ready to make such admissions of weaknesses if I were quite sure that those weaknesses were to be definitive. But what somewhat reassures me and makes me look upon them as not necessarily the result of age is that I have always known similar ones and often they were very prolonged. I believe that the simple admission I made at the time when I was suffering from them might bring some help to those who are too readily discouraged and have a tendency to think everything lost as soon as they have to put off until later on the realization of their hopes.

What a wonderful confirmation of my "proverb of hell" (it is with fine sentiments that bad literature is made) I find in Beaumarchais's

<sup>11</sup> "Concerning the Knowledge of Man in the Eighteenth Century," one of the essays in *The New Mondays*.

<sup>12</sup> Those extracts covered the dates 27 June 1932 through September 1932, ending with the notation: "Rather keep silent than complain. . . ."

*Les Deux Amis*, and even in his *Eugénie* (where there are nevertheless some charming scenes).<sup>13</sup>

It was not of medicine that Molière made fun, but of tradition. Let there be no mistake about it.

It is Lenin himself (and I am not putting these words into his mouth) who speaks of "the revolutionary democratic spirit . . . of early Christianity" before it had become a "state religion." If one believes Dujardin, who claims to have studied the "sacred texts" for ten years, many interpolations, in the Gospels as well as in the Epistles of St. Paul, were presumably slipped in to favor an expedient relaxing of principles.

*Hossegor, 31 May*

Wherever I go and whatever I do, it is always out of season. But I like it this way. Sole guest of a gloomy grand hotel (gloomy merely because it is empty) which will not begin to fill up before July. I shall be gone well before. I should like this country if only I could find someone to fall in love with; but I search the countryside in vain. . . .

At this Writers' Congress so many delegates from so many countries would still like to speak, ought to speak. But what can be done when faced with the eloquence of certain orators who go on at length? . . . to call for, it so happens, to insist upon, everyone's right to speak. The oratorical excess of a few reduces the others to silence. I am thinking in particular of that woman who represents Greece and who has been pointed out to me. I am told that she is waiting her turn, waiting in vain. She made the long trip, I am told, in fourth class — a painful trip, painfully paid for by a group of workers, her comrades. . . . It is most likely she that I see at a distance, on the platform, in the second row, wearing a saffron-colored peplum, seated alone. At once I approach her and, putting into my voice all the sympathy I can:

"It is fortunate, comrade, that Greece is represented here."

Then she, turning her beautiful face toward me and in an undertone:

"I am India."

So that the unfortunate representative of Greece will not even have the consolation of my remark.

. . . Judged from this angle, literature has ceased to have any but a documentary interest.

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<sup>13</sup> *The Two Friends* (1770) and *Eugénie* (1767) are both moralizing dramas written before the famous *Barber of Seville*.

"The only ones who should write," writes Poulaille, "are those who have something to say." *Id est*: something to relate. Those who have seen something.<sup>14</sup>

What an illusion! And how readily one feels, upon reading this or that reportage, for instance, that — however important and passionately interesting it may be — outside of what he has seen, the author has nothing to say to us. The question begins precisely where Poulaille leaves off.

Upon reading a stupid invective aroused by Valéry's amusing sally which I took care not to let slip by: "At our age one has resigned oneself to the masterpieces of others," I become aware that that remark is not so clear as it had first seemed to me. In order to understand it properly, one must doubtless have in one's youth experienced that special fervor which plunges you, when faced with a recognized masterpiece, into a sort of jealous fury after an initial impulse toward veneration — which urges you to think: After all, you are but the work of a man. You won't be able to hide your secret from me.

That sally, moreover, bears the mark of Valéry, whose mind has always been, much more than mine, concerned to analyze and take apart every work of art — in the way in which Poe decomposes, after having composed, his poem, and much more subtly still than Poe.

Then comes, with age, a sort of resignation. One tells oneself: You can excel only in your direction. There are many possibilities of greatness. Perfection cannot be achieved without limitation.

*La Lenk, 30 July*

Ascent, the day before yesterday, through the need of proving to myself that I still could. . . . But, at times, I was exhausted. Somewhat alarmed by the rapid beating of my heart. Furious at that trick of mountains, of always hiding behind a first summit another harder to reach, which would have discouraged you if you had been able to see it at first — from which one hopes at last, and in vain, to "have a view." It makes me think of the trick of fortune-tellers, always enticing you into further expenditure by a clever suspension of promises and of the revelation. Just one more little effort and you will be given the whole works!

*La Lenk, 2 August*

Yesterday, national holiday. In the large *salle à manger* (hideous expression) of the hotel, before dinner, an invisible orchestra plays the national anthem; everyone rises, intones in chorus with gravity and

<sup>14</sup> The reference is doubtless to Henry Poulaille's *Nouvel Age littéraire* (*A New Literary Age*), a study of proletarian letters that came out in 1930.

fervor; tears come to my eyes as always in the case of any unanimous understanding. I consider myself somewhat ridiculous, but can do nothing about it; it is too much for me. And I am quite willing to accept the "too much for me" when it emanates from the depths of my being. I even believe that the more particular the individual, the more gripping the delight he takes in being suddenly absorbed into the mass and losing his identity. Profound delight, which doubtless does not exist if nothing first distinguishes him; for the joy lies in giving. This is also why the acceptance of Communism, in my opinion, far from disavowing individualization, *calls for it*, and why I believe that a healthy Communist society favors and demands strong personalities.

The clinging of some to an abject system which would seem to them unacceptable if they were not accustomed to it from childhood, so that it is hard for them to believe that another form of society is possible<sup>15</sup> — and they can think only as capitalists and believe it impossible to think properly otherwise — their clinging comes from the fact that this system favors them and that they are lamentably attached to everything of which a different social system would deprive them — that is to say, acquired and transmitted possessions. The only ones who are willing to be divested of them are those who feel within themselves a sufficient personal value. It is through recognition of a great inner poverty that they are so deliberately conservative. Not all; some are so also through attachment to the past, hatred of the new, refusal to envisage the advantages that a new state might bring with it, or incapacity to imagine anything whatever of which the past does not provide an example, great horror of being disorganized, even with a view to a better organization — yes, great incapacity to imagine this, at least vividly enough to believe in it. Above all, lack of confidence in man. And how clever religion is in keeping up that lack of confidence!

3 August

Cultivate the differences. . . . What misunderstanding allows Guéneno to reproach me with that? No need of cultivating the rest, which will never be lost. But the rare, the exceptional, the unique — what a loss it would be for all if it happened to disappear! It goes without saying that if the peculiarities are not genuine and are artificially obtained, the game is off. One is not concerned with sham. But man's figure deserves to be constantly enriched. Woe to whoever attempts

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<sup>15</sup> " . . . I am tempted to believe that what are called necessary institutions are often merely the institutions to which one is accustomed, and that in regard to a social constitution the field of possibilities is much vaster than the men who live in each society imagine it to be." (Tocqueville: *Souvenirs*, p. 112.) [A.]

to reduce it! Or even merely to limit its features. What has once taken place may repeat itself, and any happy anomaly requires to be observed and protected, at the risk of being reduced to the common level of the whole. For it has everything against it, and, to begin with, opinion. Natural history, here again, can teach us, and the cautious work of experimenters. What care they lavish upon any vegetable or animal "sport," any rare variety, even though sometimes due to some accident of deficiency or disease (oh, Jean-Jacques! oh, Dostoyevsky!). Does one ever know in advance the advantage that may sometimes arise from it? What unexpected substitutions will result from a partial short-coming?

Through anxiety, Guéhenno, to approve and espouse only the most general, most common sentiments of humanity, you impoverish it. I see that ideal figure of man with a thick common mass all haloed with individual possibilities. Is it necessary to repeat it again? — Any effort toward disindividualization in the interest of the mass is, in the last analysis, baneful to the mass itself.

What sensitive souls do not like is red. They have a horror of the shedding of blood, of shots. Let a few men find a sudden death in a fray, and they are shocked and what a row at once in the papers! They endure more easily the fact that thousands of starving people should perish, but little by little, without a sound and not too close to them. And, moreover, "the statistics are most likely exaggerated"; and *their* paper says nothing of it.

One sees come down from the mountain creatures without beauty or grace, as if hacked out of fir trees; most likely with a mentality of conifers. . . . Oh, how much more delicacy I felt in certain tribes of the Congo!

*"Reprendre du poil de la bête* (to take a hair of the animal): seek one's remedy in the very thing that caused the evil, begin over again." (Littré.)

That saying, which is overused today, is tending to get away from its original meaning. Those who use it probably think they are dealing with an image borrowed from riding and link it up with "getting back in the saddle," which probably seems to them more banal and, hence, less expressive. Yet it is the almost exact translation of the English expression: "take a hair of the dog that bit you"<sup>18</sup> — which has kept its original sense, even restricted until it is scarcely used, I believe, except for the drunkard who, on awaking, takes a drink of what made him drunk the day before.

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<sup>18</sup> In English in the text, followed by a literal French rendering.

It is good that the voice of the indigent, too long stifled, should manage to make itself heard. But I cannot consent to listen to nothing but that voice. Man does not cease to interest me when he ceases to be miserable; quite the contrary. That it is important to aid him in the beginning goes without saying, like the plant it is essential to water at first; but this is in order to get it to flower, and I am concerned with the blossom.

Nothing illustrates my thought better than this cynical and wonderfully ferocious remark of Valéry, so eloquent "in the domain of the absurd." It was a long time ago. We were young! We had mingled with the idlers who formed a circle around a troop of wretched mountebanks. It was, I recall, on the raised strip of pavement in the boulevard Saint-Germain, in front of the statue of Broca.<sup>17</sup> They were admiring a poor woman, thin and gaunt, in pink tights despite the cold. Her teammate had tied her, wrapped her up, skillfully from head to foot, with a rope that went around her I don't know how many times and from which, by a sort of wriggling, she was to manage to free herself. Sorry image of the fate of the masses; but no one thought of the symbol; the audience merely contemplated in stupid bliss the patient's efforts. She twisted, writhed, slowly freed one arm, then the other, and when at last the final cord fell from her, Valéry took me by the arm:

"Let's go now! *She has ceased suffering.*"

If one fails to understand the irony, the tragic beauty of this remark, it's a pity.

4 August

Oh, if only, ceasing to suffer, they were able to become men! Alas, how many of them owe their dignity, their claim on our sympathy, merely to their misfortune!

Likewise, so long as the plant has not blossomed, one can hope that its flowering will be beautiful. . . . What a mirage surrounds what has not yet blossomed! What a disappointment when one can no longer blame the abjection on a deficiency!

Yet these reflections do not make me pessimistic. But they convince me that there is no worth-while emancipation but what is accompanied by education and upbringing.

Certain days boredom may suddenly swoop down upon me like a vulture, with the strength of a passion and almost resembling hatred.

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<sup>17</sup> A statue of Paul Broca, professor of the medical faculty and senator (1824-80), until recently stood close to the Odéon métro station on the south side of the boulevard Saint-Germain between rue de Condé and rue Dupuytren.

And the whole world suddenly seems to me like the gray wall of a lantern no longer lighted up from the inside. And I think with horror of all those for whom this condition, so fleeting with me, is constant. They are the hardest to help (for there are such) who owe only to themselves the dreadful impossibility of happiness.

The first condition of happiness is that man may take joy in his work. There is no real joy in rest, in leisure, unless joyful work precedes it.

The most painful work can be accompanied by joy as soon as the workman is able to enjoy the fruit of his labor. Malediction begins with the exploitation of this labor by a mysterious third person who knows nothing of the workmen but his "output."

Have you not seen certain people take pleasure in sports more painful and more full of risk than the hardest and most dangerous labors? The curse lies not in the hard work, but in the effacing of that hard work, its resorption to the benefit of someone who does not share in the effort. As soon as the work becomes a task from which the workman tries to free himself as quickly as possible, of which he wants to get rid, all joy forsakes it. Joy is found in effort only when it tends toward perfection, even without the accompaniment of emulation. The joy disappears as soon as that perfection is forced upon one.

7 August

To all the outcasts, the bent under a yoke and the heavily loaded, the thirsting, the sore at heart, the aching — assurance of a compensatory afterlife! However fanciful it may be, would you dare rob them of that hope? Yes, if it is to tell them: even "here below." Leave them eternal life, or give them revolution.

Or rather: rob them of eternal life, and you will have revolution.

I am not saying here anything that is not very banal; those of both camps are equally convinced of it, some to long for exactly what the others fear. But this is also what explains why Catholicism has so many ungodly partisans.

15 August

Back to Paris.

The oblique light of the sun's first rays on this wallpaper would like to pick out the tears and spots. But it finds none. The dining-room of the Lutétia, where I enter to get a *café au lait* (all the cafés being closed), has just been redecorated. I say this because at that early-morning hour my mind and senses awake in quivering delight, but are vulnerable, easily chafed, and fearful of difficulties. The least cloud would cast a gloom over me; but the azure is spotless; the limpid air is fresh; the weather is joyous.

I couldn't get in at rue Vaneau; the safety bolt kept me out and I did not want to disturb the concierge at so early an hour.

I went out again into the still empty streets, filled with that heady feeling of superiority which comes from anticipating the call.

Today is a holiday;<sup>18</sup> everyone will get up late. . . .

I am noting all this in order to reaccustom this notebook to its role of *journal*, for it has long been nothing but a cemetery for stillborn articles.

Yesterday evening I left Robert Levesque in Lyon, to whom I had just read *L'Intérêt général*;<sup>19</sup> with, altogether, a rather happy surprise. Many of the scenes are good; some even seemed to me (and to him) excellent. I am of the opinion that my great mistake, which gives the whole play its hybrid appearance, and often so unfortunately, comes from the effort I made to return to realism. I must resolutely get away from it, on the contrary, as I used to do.

Work of art. The majority will always be more sensitive to the size of a diamond than to the purity of its water.

Our epoch tends toward the glorification of the record much more than to standardization. This amounts to speculation on the present moment and losing sight of historical duration.

27 August

What constitutes the charm and lure of *Elsewhere*, of what we call exoticism, is not so much that nature is more beautiful there as that everything seems new to us, surprises us, and is presented to us with a sort of virginity. It is not so much "the broader flowers" as "the unsavored perfumes." . . .<sup>20</sup>

This morning I contemplate the stormy sky, the foliage washed by the shower, the play of light and shadow in the wind-tossed clouds. . . . Would my admiration be much keener if it were more astonished?

Back to Cuverville after two days in Paris. Since G. is leaving tomorrow, it is essential to find some reading that will last only one evening. I choose *Étude de femme*. I had read *Le Réquisitionnaire* and *La Bourse* on preceding evenings with the greatest success.<sup>21</sup> Because of the perfection of the portrait of Mme de Listomère, the appropriate tone of the dialogues throughout this very short tale, because of the equilibrium, the sobriety, the perfection of *Le Réquisitionnaire*, I come

<sup>18</sup> The Feast of the Assumption is a holiday in France.

<sup>19</sup> His comedy *Robert or the Common Weal*, which was first published in Algiers in 1944-5.

<sup>20</sup> "*Les fleurs plus larges*" and "*les parfums non éprouvés*" figure in Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint Antoine* (*Temptation of St. Anthony*).

<sup>21</sup> *A Study of Woman*, *The Conscript*, and *The Purse* are all short novels or long tales by Balzac.



to think that the bombastic and comic qualities of the metaphors in *La Bourse* (which evoked hearty laughter) are perhaps not so unconscious as one is inclined to think at first. I now believe that Balzac was the first to be amused by them. It is just as useless, just as absurd to reproach him with the preposterous aspect of certain sentences in *La Bourse* as to blame the "*gémis-je*" of *Paludes* — which a critic, who is nevertheless usually rather sensitive, was kind enough to consider "hardly harmonious."<sup>22</sup>

However oddly bombastic it may seem at first, Balzac's style in *La Bourse* is an amazing achievement and shows a very subtle sense of appropriateness and harmony.

17 September

Finally finished the preface promised for a new edition of Henry Monnier, promised for a book of which I had had the idea.

Scarcely satisfied with these not very original pages, which caused me a lot of trouble and took considerable time.

Monnier is so little known today that I thought it timely not so much to comment upon him as to present him anew to readers. I was not able to place this sentence: "When he laughs, his laughter is mirthless. He laughs only when he is deriding."

There comes a time in life — and I believe that this time must come if one merely lives long enough — when the things one scorned in one's youth take their revenge, just as in the Greek tragedy Aphrodite or Dionysus takes revenge for Hippolytus' or Pentheus' disdain. Yes, today I am paying for my refusals of the past, of that long time when everything I knew to be transitory and belonging to politics and history seemed to me unworthy of real attention. The influence of Mallarmé urged me to this. I came under that influence without being aware of it, for it merely encouraged me in my natural tendency and I was not yet well aware, then, how important it is to beware of what flatters you and that the only real education comes from what goes counter to you.

Cuverville, 6 October

Not at all; my feelings or opinions in regard to *families*<sup>23</sup> are not prompted by any resentment against mine. Here again I was favored; I have no reason to complain of *my* family; quite the contrary.

<sup>22</sup> On the next to the last page of Gide's *Morasses* occurs the sentence: "For if Hubert goes away," I bewailed (*gémis-je*), 'who will come to see me at six o'clock?' The inverted form *gémis-je* makes an ugly combination of sounds that most writers would avoid; it is of course intentional here.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. I, p. 78; Vol. II, p. 288.

My arguments against families are, among others, the very ones that made Maurras write his little book on *Les Monod*.<sup>24</sup> The family spirit is opposed to the individual as well as to the state; because of the inheritance, the interests it arouses are almost always sordid; or more exactly, it makes *interest* win out everywhere. It gives encouragement to a sort of favoritism and mutual aid, without care for the real value of people. It props each one up and drives him definitely along a path to which heredity already directed him, and from which he can most often get away only by a very painful effort of recovery, by a revolt that may compromise his intellectual equilibrium in the other direction.

But "where can one be better off than in the heart of the family?"

To be sure! Shame on those who seek comfort ahead of everything in life.

Maurice Lime came to see me the day before yesterday; his work at the factory leaves him free only Saturday afternoon or Sunday. I was happy to be able to tell him all the good I thought of his book,<sup>25</sup> read very attentively this summer. He is still a very young chap, rugged, with an open laughing face and eyes that look straight at one. At once I feel utterly at ease with him, and am grateful to him for not treating me as a bourgeois, but as a comrade. Already with Jef Last I felt that sort of sudden and violent liking that leaps over artificial barriers and only derives more force from the hateful social differences. In relations among "bourgeois" there is a bit of connivance (I was about to say: complicity), a bit of that abject feeling of those who "have cared for the pigs together";<sup>26</sup> one has the same habits and wears the same shoes. Whereas here communion is established at once on the deepest and most sincere basis.

28 October

La Bruyère's remark about "coming too late" when "everything has been said," which is so often and too indulgently quoted<sup>27</sup> — makes people forget the very important paragraph 107 of *Les Jugements*:

<sup>24</sup> Beginning in 1897, Charles Maurras consistently attacked the Monod family as a symbol of "foreign" and Protestant infiltration into French intellectual life. His chapters entitled "*Les Monod peints par eux-mêmes*" ("The Monods Depicted by Themselves") began appearing in 1899 in *Action française* with the subtitle: "*Histoire naturelle et politique d'une famille de protestants étrangers dans la France contemporaine*" ("Natural and Political History of a Family of Foreign Protestants in Contemporary France").

<sup>25</sup> *Pays conquis* (*Conquered Territory*), first published in 1935.

<sup>26</sup> This expression, most common in the negative or interrogative, implies the great familiarity of those who have worked together.

<sup>27</sup> "After about seven thousand years, during which there have been

"If the world is only to last a hundred million years, it is still in all its freshness, and has but just begun . . . what new things will spring up in arts, in sciences, in nature, and, I venture to say, even in history, which are as yet unknown to us! What discoveries will be made! What various revolutions will happen in states and empires! What ignorance must be ours, and how slight is an experience of not above six or seven thousand years!"<sup>28</sup>

Why is this passage never quoted? I was stopped short by it, yesterday evening.

#### THE REFUGEE

He rings just as I was about to go out. I have an appointment with the dentist; am already late. No one to open the door and tell him: "Monsieur is not in." I come lacing up my shoes. The refugee begins an endless story to explain to me that his case ought to interest me particularly. He takes out of a leather briefcase an album containing many signatures of celebrities, urges me to add mine; this is odious to me. When he hears me sniffle, he thinks he is showing kindness by exclaiming: "Have you a cold?" He would like to move me to pity; but I haven't the time to be stirred. "Come back another day; you see that today I cannot . . ." "I had already come yesterday." Now that he has me, he wants to take advantage; this is awkward of him; he only succeeds in irritating me; he feels this and wastes a little more time excusing himself. All the hope he had put in my advice, my help, my aid, is deflated. His voice trembles, he tries to find words. . . .

And all day long I carry about my remorse for that insufficient help, for my abruptness, for my impatience. If I had only taken down the poor fellow's name and address, as I generally do. But no, no way of making up. . . .

Intolerable *moral feeling* of deficiency, of indigence (I am the indigent one in this case).

30 October

As soon as I am in the train on the way toward Marseille, my thought, eventually liberated from those constant worries obsessing me, becomes alert, active, creative again. It is an indescribable delight, and not comparable to any other.

I imagine a continuation to the two chapters of my *Geneviève*,

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men who have thought we come too late to say anything that has not been said already. The finest and most beautiful ideas on morals and manners have been swept away before our times, and nothing is left for us to glean after the ancients and the ablest among the moderns." (Translation by Henri van Laun of *The Characters of Jean de La Bruyère*.)

²⁸ From the same translation.

which I have in my bag; after having read the very good article by J. de Saint-Chamond in *Le Mercure* on the "Leningrad Conversations."

Great tendency, as often, to take for laziness the feeling of my fatigue.

What complication made me, yesterday as I got out of the train, refuse my luggage to the porter, insisting on lugging myself my heavy valise and the big bag to the auto that is to take Jef and me from Menton to Roquebrune — though I knew very well that that would tire my heart, which I am decidedly obliged to watch.

Is it to the weakness of my heart that I owe these sudden feelings of emotion when faced with the beauty of certain flowers (in the Bussys' charming garden, certain unknown plants of surprising strangeness — and many very beautiful flowers still, despite the season)? I foresee a tearful senility.

There is reason to be constantly in a state of wonder; how, as soon as man ceases, if not to meddle with it, at least to oppose and thwart nature, does the least burst of life, in the plant and in the animal, and in the whole organic world, find such ravishing expressions (and I mean ravishing in relation to man, that is to say capable of ravishing our senses) — or, reversing the elements of the problem: how does it happen that what is most capable of bringing delight to our senses is just what most satisfies joy (the form of a shell, of a fin, of a wing . . .)? And who can say if, for colors as well as for forms, those harmonies which delight us do not work, in a way we cannot understand, for the intimate satisfaction of the creature they clothe?

The lines of Baudelaire, exquisite among all:

*Mainte fleur épanche à regret
Son parfum doux comme un secret
Dans les solitudes profondes,*²⁹

which I still prefer to those of Gray which they translate so miraculously:

*Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air*

— these lines betray a sly anthropocentrism that is charmingly naïve: it seems, according to Gray or Baudelaire, that the flower's scent and the softness of its colors have no other aim than to caress the eye or

²⁹ *Many a flower regretfully
Pours forth its perfume so secretly
Sweet in the deepest of solitudes.*

These lines are from the poem "Le Guignon" ("Bad Luck") in *Les Fleurs du mal*.

nostrils of man. Small matter if the "deepest of solitudes" in which the flower blooms is peopled by a thousand similar flowers, to whose approval it would be natural for the flower to be more sensitive than to the eying and sniffing of men — if it can be said that it is sensitive to anything. But that is just where the mystery lies: why and how does all this become, when it passes through man's senses, harmony?

He who signs R. K. in *Le Temps* of the 1st of December confuses everything in order to reduce to absurdity my remark: "The caterpillar that really wants to know itself would never become a butterfly" (to which Brunschvicg most pertinently writes me that the caterpillar does not really know itself unless it succeeds in knowing in itself even its possible metamorphosis) — I invite him to meditate on this: that the expression "I know myself" is never used except in a restrictive sense ("I know myself: I do not . . ."), and that in a broadening sense, on the contrary, "I no longer recognized myself," which is always followed by the assertion of something or other of which one would not have thought oneself capable.

And this allows me to believe that my paradoxical sally none the less contains, despite what R. K. may say of it, a large share of truth.

No, it would be false to say that my opinions, my thoughts, have not changed, and it would be dishonest of me to claim it. But the great, the very important change is this: I had thought, until quite recently, that it was important first to change man, men, each man; and that this was where one had to begin. This is why I used to write that the ethical question was more important to me than the social question.

Today I let myself be convinced that man himself cannot change unless social conditions first urge him and help him to do so — so that attention must first be paid to them.

But attention must be paid to both.

It is also, it is in great part, the stupidity and dishonesty of the attacks against the U.S.S.R. that today make us defend her with a certain obstinacy. They, the fault-finders, will begin to approve her just when we shall cease to do so; for they will approve her compromises and concessions, which will make the others say: "You see!" but by which she will wander from the end she originally pursued. May our eyes, while continuing to focus on that end, not be led, thereby, to turn away from the U.S.S.R.

When "it's not going right," I walk up and down in my room, then, somewhat through impatience, I seize almost at random a book from my shelf (not one of those books lying on my table which I am "in the course" of reading, but one of those old constant companions, which are always there, to which everything brings me back) and open it really at random. This "random chance" would make me believe in the devil or in providence, for I fall at once, almost every time, on the page, on the sentence, on the words I just happen to need to start off again. Thus it is that yesterday Browning offered me a short poem I had never yet read: "The Lost Leader," which it seemed he had written particularly for me and just for the present moment. (This is not the first time that Browning bucks me up and counsels me.) I understood that it was about Wordsworth (don't try to be smart: a note in the book told you explicitly) — who, after having been enthusiastic about the French Revolution, turned about and took sides with the defenders of "order." Not every line in the poem, the note says very fairly, can be exactly applied, moreover, to Wordsworth — who served Browning only as a pretext, his falling away only as a starting-point, for a poem; one more opportunity for Browning to depersonalize himself in order to put himself momentarily into someone else. This someone else is not Wordsworth in this case, but whoever becomes indignant over his falling away. Despite his perpetual alibis, through them, it is nevertheless Browning speaking to us here; and, particularly here, it is his voice that I recognize:

Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,

Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch from their graves!

He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,

He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering, — not thro' his presence;

Songs may inspirit us, — not from his lyre;

Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his quiescence,

Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:

Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,

One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,

One more triumph for devils and sorrow for angels,

One wrong more to man, one more insult to God! ¹

¹ Gide has quoted but these dozen lines of the poem in his own translation.

I stop, for of the quivering emotion of this poem I feel that very little subsists in my translation. And I spoke of it only for this reason:

What an amazing anthology one could make (in which would figure for instance the page of La Bruyère I copied out recently) grouping and bringing out of all the great writings of the past the revolutionary element. It seems that school work consists in taming the classics; they appear tempered, sobered, softened, inoffensive; familiarity has dulled their sharpest weapons. They cannot be *properly* read without giving them back some of their edge.

At sea, 12 February

Flee! Inhabit for a time some abstract, hollow, and unfurnished region or other, in which to abstain from living, from judging, yet without betraying or deserting any cause.

We were to leave Marseille yesterday at four o'clock; but, because of the strikes, the loading had not been completed before night. It was during dinner that the *Canada* imperceptibly got under way.

Marcel de Coppet, now Governor-General of French West Africa, with whom I am traveling, got me a very comfortable cabin. I feel very reduced, very well-behaved. Yesterday I was still running a temperature of 100.4 degrees, and all these last few days doubted if I could leave. No curiosity; almost none; rather acquitting a sort of duty, or obligation, toward myself: the hope that, once there, I shall be grateful to myself for having gone. Yet, right up to the last moment, I hoped for the little calamity that would keep me from going and would allow me to think: "What a narrow escape!"

Remained stretched out all morning, soaking in emptiness, incapable of thinking, even of reading. At about eleven o'clock we enter a foggy region in which the ship advances slowly, timidly, and blowing its foghorn.

At moments one even doubts whether we are still advancing; then a sort of barely perceptible pulsation gives evidence of the ship's effort.

14 February

Got up at six o'clock. Bands of reddish clouds torn by the Atlas Mountains. In the saloon two priests are celebrating Mass. Through the open door I watch at length two kneeling nuns whose faces I cannot see, as far away from the altar as the width of the room allows; very simple, very beautiful bearing, without any ostentation. No other people.

At Algiers from eight to noon: visit to the Heurgons, whom I greatly enjoy seeing; but very little pleasure in seeing Algiers again, so faded since the time of Wilde.

And all the rest of the day I remain in bed. Numbness, torpor.

I finish *Journée* by Claire Sainte-Soline, which, in its good parts, is in no way inferior to Marguerite Audoux. Certain dialogues with the old aunt, while the latter is seeking a justification, are excellent. Much less successful the imaginary monologues following the crime.

Read with the keenest interest almost the whole July issue of *Esprit*.

19 February

If all goes well (and the weather is radiant), we shall reach Dakar in three hours. It is eight now. I still have to shave, change, close my bags, and finish *Much Ado about Nothing*. Gave up noting day by day; I should have had to be more astonished. During the whole crossing, saw nothing alive in the sea but a paltry flying fish. A flock of sea gulls was still flying yesterday after the sun had set, and again this morning they escort us before dawn.

I have read *Billy Budd*.² Finished *Faust*. Considerable poetry of Goethe, in the Insel-Verlag edition that Ernst Robert Curtius gave me at Bonn in 1930. Read Colette's latest book³ with very keen interest. There is in it much more than a literary gift: a sort of very peculiarly feminine genius and a great intelligence. What choice, what order, what happy proportions in an account apparently so unbridled! What utter tact, what courteous discretion in confidence (in the portraits of Polaire, of Jean Lorrain, of Willy above all, of "Monsieur Willy"); not a touch that fails to hit its mark and to mark itself in one's memory, sketched as at random, as if while playing, but with a subtle, accomplished art. I constantly skirted, brushed against that society that Colette depicts and that I recognize here, artificial, sophisticated, hideous, and against which, most fortunately, an unconscious residue of puritanism put me on guard. It does not seem to me that Colette, despite all her superiority, was not somewhat contaminated by it.

Saint-Louis, 8 March

Read *Richard II*, the two *Henry IV's*, and *Henry V*. I should have liked to go on at once, but Christiane de Coppet asked my advice about *Catherine Furze*,⁴ which she had planned to translate and which distracted me from Shakespeare for a few days.

I do not think this book can find many readers in France; less and less: palates spoiled by too many spices can no longer taste what is

² By Melville. [A.]

³ *Mes Apprentissages*. [A.] In *My Years of Apprenticeship*, Colette tells of her marriage to Monsieur Willy and her beginning to write for his signature the now famous *Claudine* series. Some of the best episodes concern the music-hall singer Polaire, whom Willy dressed and promenaded as a "twin" of Colette.

⁴ A novel by Mark Rutherford (William Hale White).

pure. Falsehood triumphs everywhere, and the most regrettable thing is that man is so often satisfied with it. He who lies himself readily accepts being lied to; this begins in childhood and the taste for truth is being progressively lost.

I find in *Catherine Furze* the so specifically Protestant qualities and virtues of Rutherford which awakened such profound echoes in me when, for the first time, I read his two little volumes: *Autobiography* and *Deliverance*. Here honesty and integrity become poetic virtues, beside which everything seems camouflaged, unauthentic, and overloaded. The human soul may be compared to palimpsests: here is read the original writing, so difficult to make out through the accumulation of retouchings and additions. The very style of William Hale White (Mark Rutherford) is exquisitely transparent, scintillatingly pure. He develops to perfection qualities that I wish were mine. His art is made of the renunciation of all false riches. He is apolitical, because there is no politics without fraud.

This morning the white sails of the canoes going out fishing dotted the sea with flowers. The dew was so heavy that one might have thought it had rained. On my terrace the wagtails come to swig the drops of water on the flagstones. The air is fresh, ineffably keen and pure: one feels as if breathing directly from the sky's azure and drinking ambrosia like a god. The gulls whirl gliding over the river, of which there is but the small arm here, beyond which I see the market becoming active; its sound of songs and shouts reaches me. Close to the market a group of coconut palms waves softly in the breeze. Above the pink roofs and pointed huts of the fishing village spread out on the opposite bank, I see a strip of sea.

. . . And just as it happens that, through a modulation, an already known melody of which the charm seems exhausted takes on a new freshness. . . .

The feast of the sheep: of ancient tradition, which it seems one might be able to link up to the story of Abraham's sacrifice, of which this solemn ceremony would presumably be the commemoration. I am then told that the idea of sacrifice is found in all religions, and even of sacrifice through substitution; it is to save the child that the goat is killed, etc., etc. . . . for immediately the related idea of retribution, of atonement, of expiation, of redemption is grafted thereon. . . . But one can see in it also the proof that the whole story of Abraham is invented, born of the need of specifying the myth (and did not Couchoud go so far as to claim the figure of Christ to have been likewise created to fit the dogma?). I don't mind; it is enough for me that every line of that tale is admirably eloquent, allows the heart to

intervene, and swells with life that putting of the abstract into concrete form.

Last night I had a strange dream. I had not gone to sleep until very late in that improvised room of the Aleg outpost, both doors of which, to get a draft, remained open onto the vast night, giving access, together with breaths of warm air, to a multitude of bats that wait until morning to cling to the beams of the ceiling and go to sleep in turn.

My dream had transported me into a large drawing-room full of people. I was smoking a big cigar and considered this quite natural though I have not lighted a cigar more than three times in my whole life. A lady, whom I knew very well in my dream and yet did not recognize, approached me to say that the odor of the cigar bothered her. I then went to a window and, opening it, threw my cigar out. Beneath the window lay a broad terrace with a balustrade and, in a row along the balustrade, a few armchairs. It happened that my cigar, carelessly thrown, had fallen on one of them, and someone pointed out to me that it was going to burn the chair. Then, without stirring, by an effort of the will, I made the cigar rise up and return to me like a boomerang. It floated for some time in the air, as if hesitating, and then bumped, with the end I had first had in my mouth and which was still a bit damp, not exactly between my lips, which I was opening to receive it, but against this spot on my left cheek — just where there plopped a dropping from a bat sleeping above my head; this awakened me. It was dawn.

4 April

Finished reading the historical plays of Shakespeare, with sustained interest and an almost constant admiration: *Richard II*, the two *Henry IV*'s, *Henry V*, the three *Henry VI*'s, *Richard III*, *Henry VIII* — in all, nine plays.

I read in *La Démocratie en Amérique* by Tocqueville:

"More than once in the course of this work I have sought to bring out the amazing influence that the social condition seemed to me to exercise over the laws and customs of men." (Vol. II, p. 325.)

The last day I wanted to revisit the little oasis of Chor. It is really nothing but a clump of trees, about a league from the town, separated from it by the river first then by a desolate region broken up by brackish marshes frequented by stiltbirds. That oasis used to shelter in the past a small Protestant mission; the house remains, but it is closed. Near it some twenty native huts and gardens surrounded by "seccos." Incessant waterings maintain a sort of humid semi-coolness here, ex-

quisite after the heat round about. In the center of the grouped huts, a little square where the women and children gather; a fountain where the gardeners come to fill their watering-cans. That is where I had come to sit the first day, forgetting the hour and all the cares in the world, smiling at the women, at the children. Did the latter recognize me? As soon as I approached, this last day, two tiny tots ran up and immobilized me by embracing each a leg; they just reached my knee; then they ran off laughing, with the little coin I gave them; then they began to scream when their mothers tried to take the coin away from them; and when I intervened so that it might be left them, the women began to laugh. I approached a group of slightly older children. One of them held on a string a strange team of four rather big lizards, of the kind that are called, I believe, gray lizards.

His companions were getting ready to catch others. For this purpose they use long reed stems to the end of which they attach a horse-hair arranged in a noose. The lizard, as he flees, slips into the noose that has been placed before his nose while he is still motionless on a palm trunk or on the slope of a roof. This game greatly amused the children and for some time I took part in their delight.

A little later and after I had observed at length the frolics of charming tiny birds (finches, I believe), I was again drawn by the children's shouts. Now they were gathered outside the village in a thick group, busy with something or other I could not make out at first. I approached. They had with them some ten of those lizards they had just caught. Their new game consisted in letting them free: they were letting them go one after another, but in order to stone them at once. The lizard, at last out of the noose, would first hesitate for a few moments as if still doubting his freedom, not yet sure of his happiness; then would set out, and, as soon as he had got a few yards away, would receive a hail of projectiles that would squash him against the ground.

I was revolted by this sight, the joyful stamping, the cruelty of the children, their laughter at the lizards' agonized leaps. Was I going to approach, admonish them, tell them that lizards do no harm, but are on the contrary good for something, make them ashamed of their cowardice . . . ? I went away, telling myself: leave them alone; at most I should interrupt their game for a few moments . . . but went away all gloomy, deploring the fact that I was not staying in the region long enough to return to Chor, to talk with those children and, not prevent them, but convince them.

Read with rapture *La Double Inconstance*.⁵ I do not believe I have liked any other play of Marivaux more; nor even anywhere near as much.

⁵ Marivaux's comedy, *The Double Inconstancy*.

Light in August by Faulkner.⁶ I had hoped to be able to admire it much more. Certain pages are those of a great book; lost in manner and device. Faulkner remains too constantly aware of his characters' lack of awareness, which he never tires of bringing out and playing up. How monotonously he insists on it!

"The mediocrity of the condition makes the thoughts mediocre."
(Marivaux: *Le Legs*⁷ scene xxi.)

"My honor is not made to be noble: it is too reasonable for that."
(*Double Inconstance*, Act III, scene iv.)

Copy the scenes between Arlequin and Trivelin, for the anthology.⁸

At sea

Wanted to reread *Nathan der Weise*, discovering a complete Lessing in the ship's library. "This is the very first time anyone has asked for that book!" the librarian tells me. But I do not go beyond the first act. Shall continue it at Cuverville.

Reread *Beatrice*.⁹ My recollection overlooked the frightful awkwardnesses, heavinesses, and improbabilities of the dialogues. But suddenly the book picks up and the last part (written at another period?) almost turns into a masterpiece.

I am not quite sure that, in life, duties do not interest me even more than pleasures.

The sentences we form do not "clothe" our thought so much as they skirt it. Each of the words in the garland falls short of or adventures beyond what it claims to express of us, just as a vine wraps itself around a branch but cannot take its exact shape. Always, on some side or other, our ego remains undressed; always overdressed on some other.

I had inscribed several copies of my *Nourritures terrestres*: "*son vieux ami*"¹⁰ — which seemed to me almost a mistake; but am amused to find in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: "*Un vieux arbre . . .*" (page 48

⁶ Since Gide gives the title in French, he probably read this novel in the translation by M. E. Coindreau, which appeared in 1935.

⁷ *The Bequest*.

⁸ Doubtless the anthology suggested in the first entry for 1936, which has never appeared.

⁹ By Balzac.

¹⁰ The customary form of "his old friend," insisted upon by the grammars, is *son vieil ami*, the form of the adjective commonly changing before a word beginning with a vowel or mute *h*.

of the Nelson edition), pointed out to me by Catherine, to whom I gave *Paul et Virginie* yesterday.

4 May

Why did I not read earlier these sentences of Goethe on which I fell yesterday evening, opening at random the *Gespräche mit Eckermann* ¹¹ before going to sleep. I should have quoted them in support of my reflections regarding the correspondence between Réaumur and Tremblay.¹² This morning I look up the translation and quote according to it.

"In dealing with nature one must proceed cautiously and slowly if one wants to get something from it. When, in my researches in natural history, an idea would come to me, *I did not demand that nature should justify me at once*; no, I would continue to observe, I would experiment, and I was happy if from time to time she deigned to be kind enough to confirm my theoretical idea. When she would contradict it, she would lead me occasionally to another notion, of which she was perhaps more disposed to prove the correctness, and which I would study, while always following her footsteps." (1 October 1828.)

The propaganda of the U.S.S.R. is not always very adroit. Are not the results already sufficiently eloquent in themselves? For the French public, always disposed to mock, it would be better not to play up the success too much, not to write (*U.S.S.R. under Construction*, No. 11): ". . . a *tremendous* reservoir is being built up. . . . The mountain streams, *both large and small*, the springs, the water from the melting of the snows, the subterranean waters, and *even the rains themselves* (as if this were peculiar to the U.S.S.R.!), *all these torrents, these trickles, these drops and droplets* (!) will be carefully collected (oh, come! . . .) in a twelve-kilometer lake . . ." (that alone is important to tell; all the rest is only bluff and can only irritate the reader: excusable solely if one thinks of the youth of the Russian people, of the novelty of their effort: their astonishment is childish).

Cuverville, 16 May

The annoying habit I have recently assumed of publishing numerous pages from this journal in the *N.R.F.* (somewhat from impatience and because I was not writing anything else) has gradually detached me from it as from an indiscreet friend to whom cannot trust anything without his repeating it at once. How much more abundant my confidence would have been if it could have remained posthumous! And even while writing this, I imagine it already printed and calculate the reader's disapproval. At times I get to the point of thinking that the absence of echo of my writings, for a long time, allowed them every-

¹¹ *Conversations with Eckermann*.

¹² See p. 82.

thing that constituted their value. It was important to assure my words a survival that would allow them to reach future readers. I am extraordinarily embarrassed by this immediate repercussion (approbation as much as blame) which will henceforth greet everything that falls from my pen. Ah, the happy time when I was not listened to! And how well one speaks so long as one speaks in the desert! To be sure, it was certainly to be heard that I spoke, but not right away. The odes of Keats, the *Fleurs du mal*, still remain as if enveloped in that silence of their contemporaries, in which their eloquence is amplified for us.

17 May

I consequently tore up all the work done at Saint-Louis, as I had torn up the result of my work at Syracuse. I was obliged to bow to the facts: that third chapter of *Geneviève* was worth nothing. It was worse than bad: undistinguished. Useless to try to redo it; were I to spend months more on it, I should not make it any better. It is better to cut it out, leave the book unfinished, and not wear out on it my remaining fervor. The second chapter, moreover, ends in such a way as to offer a sort of possible conclusion — æsthetically at least — although precisely opposed to what I had planned. I should have liked to make Geneviève catch hold of herself after her mother's death, say to herself: "The way I take hardly matters, but only where I am heading." This was to be the beginning of the third chapter, and I strove in vain to slip this sentence into the very end of the second; it would have ruined everything. I preferred to give up.¹³

And now I take up again *L'Intérêt général*, which I had given up hope of completing successfully. I like certain scenes: the ones I wrote with the least effort and uninterruptedly. But what efforts, later on, to make the transitions! If, according to Marx, I took the working time as a measure of value, that play would certainly be my masterpiece. But this is playing with words. I just happen to be reading (with great interest and advantage) the little book by Schaeffle, *The Quintessence of Socialism* (1874), that Marcel Drouin lent me.

Too constantly clothed, it is odd the number of people in whom the mere idea of nakedness immediately awakens lewd echoes.

I note, in the *Visite à Buffon* by Hérault de Séchelles, this very beautiful remark of Buffon, somewhat different from that of the *Discours sur le style*: "Genius is but a greater aptitude for patience."¹⁴

* * *

¹³ In its final state, published in 1939, *Geneviève* has but two chapters and does not contain this sentence.

¹⁴ See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, p. 104.

Paris, 3 September:

. . . A tremendous, a dreadful confusion. Dined with Schiffrin, who is trying to cling to me and to find some aid in my conversation. He speaks to me of his "disappointment" in the U.S.S.R. and of Guilloux's;¹⁶ relates the long conversation they had on the way back. I argue: the word "disappointment" seems to me inexact; but I do not know just what to suggest in its place.

We try out on Marc's phonograph some of the records that were given me by the U.S.S.R.; but, as I very much feared, the only one I really desired (the wonderful chorus of Caucasian women heard in Moscow, then at Tiflis) is not there. Probably charged with "formalism."

Marc spreads a bit more gloom over us by his story of the exclusion (from the union) of that carpenter who consented to help some comrades for a moment outside the regular hours of work.

Come home very tired after having dined with Schiffrin at the Corsican restaurant near Lipp's, I resume a little equilibrium and serenity only by reading, before going to sleep (i.e., before trying to) long successions of wonderful lines in *Dieu* and *La Fin de Satan*.¹⁷

4 September

Yesterday I saw Malraux. He has just arrived from Madrid, to which he returns in two days.¹⁸ When I arrive rue du Bac, Clara takes me aside. She is a bit calmer than yesterday. Little Flo is playing near us as she did yesterday. (She is given the biggest dahlia of a bouquet, which she pulls apart to make a "salad.")

And, while André soaks in a bath:

"Do you know what he said upon arriving? That since I had left him he had been able to *act* much more."

"Does that mean there was a scene?"

"Oh, no! But he is right to detach himself from everything. . . . Why, when he saw the child, he exclaimed: 'What! the child is here?'"

"He didn't know it?"

"No, I had taken care not to tell him. I knew he wouldn't like to see her again. He needs to feel his heart free."

"He is not annoyed that I should come?"

¹⁵ Back from the trip to the U.S.S.R. [A.]

¹⁶ On his voyage André Gide was accompanied by Jef Last, Jacques Schiffrin, Eugène Dabit, who died at Sebastopol on the return journey, Pierre Herbart, and Louis Guilloux.

¹⁷ *God* and *The End of Satan* are both by Victor Hugo.

¹⁸ The novelist André Malraux was at this time fighting in the Loyalist army in Spain as an aviator. His experience there later produced the novel *L'Espoir* (*Man's Hope*).

"Oh no! I had told him that you would come at half past six. And just now he asked me: 'Why doesn't Gide come?' He needs to talk. I am so grateful to you for coming! He needs to pull himself together; to resume contact with . . . something else."

She told me that, for some time now, he has been sleeping only four hours a night. Yet when I see him, he doesn't seem to me too tired. His face is even less marked by nervous tics than ordinarily and his hands are not too feverish. He talks with that extraordinary volubility which often makes him so hard for me to follow. He depicts their situation, which he would consider desperate if the enemy forces were not so divided. His hope is to gather together the governmental forces; now he has power to do so. His intention, as soon as he gets back, is to organize the attack on Oviedo.

5 September

Seen Malraux again. Clara M. receives me alone at first. Then the three of us go to dine together (and very well!) Place des Victoires, at a restaurant where he had already taken me. And for two hours I am in awe before his dazzling and staggering flow of words. (Oh! I am not giving any pejorative meaning to this expression — which, originally at least, did not have any. I add, however, that it is natural that it should have taken on one — that the auditors and victims should have given it one, out of revenge.) As with Valéry, André Malraux's great strength lies in caring very little whether he winds, or tires, or "drops by the wayside" whoever is listening and who has hardly any other anxiety (when I am the one listening) but to seem to be following, rather than to follow really. This is why any conversation with those two friends remains, for me at least, somewhat mortifying, and I come away rather crushed than exalted.

Went with Schiffrin to see *Les Amants terribles*¹⁹ — where I find Robert Levesque. Marc is much too severe for his film, on the whole rather successful. To be sure, it has no great significance or importance; but the dialogue is often excellent; the acting excellent. The exquisite, tasteful images and the ingenuity, the movement, the cleverness of the cutting, the tact of the presentation make of it a most pleasing work. I can understand nevertheless that Marc should protest over excessive praises. This film does him no disservice; but he reveals in it only his gifts.

Shopping at the Bon Marché, where I lunched while reading the report of the Moscow trial (which the *Journal de Moscou* of 25 August gives in detail) — with an indescribable discomfort. What to think of

¹⁹ A film directed by Marc Allégret based on Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, with Gaby Morlay and André Luguet.

those sixteen men under indictment accusing themselves, and each one in almost the same terms, and singing the praise of a regime and a man for the suppression of which they risked their lives?

Read at the Gallimard bookshop Pierre Naville's preface to a study by his brother Claude on me.²⁰ Obviously intelligent preface. But what can I think of the criticism he makes of all of my work (until my "conversion") of not letting itself be influenced by the great social events taking place at the time when I wrote that work? Type: Archimedes at Syracuse. If the great literary works of the time of Louis XIII and Louis XIV showed a reflection of the Fronde, if we heard in them an echo of the Royal Tithe, perhaps Pierre Naville would have more consideration for them; but they would have lost that superior serenity which has made them last. As for me, I hold, quite on the contrary, that when social preoccupations began to clutter my head and heart, I wrote nothing more that matters. It is not fair to say that I remained insensitive to such questions; but my position in regard to them was the only one that an artist must reasonably take and which he must strive to maintain. As for Christ's "judge not," I understand it as an artist *too*.

6 September

This morning I received a visit (announced) from Bernard Grasset; went to console and reassure Miss Pell at the Lutétia Hotel; then to lunch at the Viénots'. Came home to sleep an hour.

At the Hôtel du Nord I find Dabit's parents alone with their daughter-in-law.²¹ Very dignified and as if settled into their mourning. I chat with them at length of their son, then accompany the one he called Biche to the home of Véra, the other woman, whom she accepts and with whom, altogether, she gets along very well.

Biche says to me of Dabit: "It's odd: between the two of us he could not make up his mind to choose. He wanted to keep both of us. He always wanted to keep everything. I believe there are many men like that."

We reach Véra's (who is occupying Biche's studio), rue de la Grande-Chaumière, where I spent so many hours of my childhood when Albert²² was painting my portrait. Véra is not at home and I leave the legitimate wife, leaving her the notebooks we had gone to get at rue Vaneau, of which she is to type out some fragments for the *N.R.F.*

²⁰ *André Gide et le communisme* appeared in June 1936.

²¹ Dabit's parents had settled down to managing the little Hôtel du Nord in Montmartre, which furnished the subject and title of their son's most striking novel.

²² André Gide's cousin, Albert Desmarest.

I wander for a moment on the boulevard Montparnasse, then take a taxi to the cinema Édouard VII, but at the entrance the stills from the film discouraged me from going in. I enter for a moment a little movie house on rue Caumartin where they show "comic" films at two or three francs a ticket and see some painfully loony and lamentably stupid shorts. Then I wander interminably, a prey to fierce boredom, gloomy and feeling capable of the worst stupidities. Everything seems frightful. Everywhere I feel the catastrophe coming. Anxious not to spend too much (for the condition of my account at the N.R.F., received yesterday, seriously alarmed me), I enter, after some hesitations, a dull little restaurant where I am writing this while finishing a table-d'hôte dinner far below the ordinary, which it will certainly take me considerable time to digest.

7 September

We are plunging into a tunnel of anguish, the end of which cannot yet be seen. Last night, before going to sleep, I read a few chapters of *L'Esprit des lois*.²³ I like that style of Montesquieu's, which holds the reader's attention and forces him to read slowly.

This morning I finish an article on Dabit and dictate it to Mme Aurousseau. I had received a visit from Louis Gérin, to whom I "preached." He took it very well, moreover. Having gone out very late, I lunched at Lipp's, then went to pick up Clara Malraux and take her to Père-Lachaise. I had told Dabit's parents that I would not be present at the burial; but I feared my absence might be badly interpreted, that it might be taken for disdain. . . . I did well to go. There are a great many there; people of the lower classes especially, and, among the literary people, nothing but friends whose grief was genuine. Very keen emotion. The father obliged me to walk beside him, with the immediate family. The speeches by Vaillant-Couturier and Aragon presented Dabit as an active and convinced partisan. Aragon in particular insisted on Dabit's complete moral satisfaction in the U.S.S.R. . . . Alas!²⁴

Returned to the N.R.F. with Gaston and Raymond Gallimard, Schiffrin, and Clara Malraux; the Paulhans had returned separately. I go back to rue Vaneau after a long conversation in Paulhan's office.

²³ Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*.

²⁴ In his *Retouches* (*Afterthoughts on the U.S.S.R.*) André Gide records that Dabit "told me more than once that he was relying on me to speak out" and quotes an article by Pierre Herbart and a letter by Jef Last, both of whom shared Dabit's room during the last weeks of his life, to the same effect. Last adds: "I dare to state that the book Gide has written was the very thing Dabit expected and demanded of him."

I am writing this out of duty. My heart is like a sponge of melancholy, and I know not where to turn.

8 September

Dabit's mother had likewise said that she would not be present at the burial. She came nevertheless, as I did despite my resolve. On the arm of a relative, the poor woman drags herself painfully to the family vault at the very top of the vast cemetery. In front of the grave she loses control of herself; her dreadful cries can be heard at a distance. Then she tears away from the arms supporting her, like a madwoman: "Go away, all of you. Leave me alone. Leave me alone, will you! I want to leave. I want to leave. . . ."

8 September

Marc got back from Saint-Jean-de-Luz during the night. Long account of the Irún fire.

Schiffrin came to lunch, then we went to the Hôtel du Nord. So *at a loss* (yes, that is the expression), both of us, that I accept going with him to the movies rather than returning home to read the proofs of Volume XII (*Faux-Monnayeurs*).²⁵ We go to see *Broken Blossoms* in the new talking version; much less good than the one in which we admired Lillian Gish. Unbearably cruel film. One touches the depths of distress. One is sated with horror. After which, even the gray sky we find as we come out seems to smile.

Robert Levesque comes to pick me up at eight o'clock and takes me to dinner with little Johnny Bühler. I greatly enjoy seeing him again. He is just back from Spain, having signed up as a Loyalist in Barcelona, with his young girl-friend France, who has, it seems, an excellent influence over him.

Reading of Montesquieu before going to sleep, after Johnny had left me. Fruitless looking for a Villon and a Plutarch. My library is in such disorder that I never find anything I want.

From the 10th or 11th of September on: Cuverville.

17 September

I had a strange dream, from which I awakened just as it was turning into a nightmare; and this is what allows me to recall it.

I was in a bedroom in which Paul Valéry, in bed, was dictating as Milton used to dictate. It was clear that he was very ill, too ill to write himself. In a corner of the room someone, who might well have been Claude Valéry, was taking the dictation; or at least he was supposed to be writing; but when I looked at him, he was busy non-

²⁵ This is the twelfth volume of the *Complete Works of André Gide*.

chalantly sharpening his pencil, while Valéry continued to utter sentences the importance of which came partly from the fact that they would perhaps be his last. And I felt fall upon me, like a command, the urgent obligation to make up for the secretary's default. I took out my fountain-pen and on a sheet of notebook paper that suddenly happened to be in my hand began to write. But there begins the nightmare. Valéry's pronunciation was more indistinct than ever; there were many words that I heard, or understood, badly; and that I did not dare ask him to repeat, in view of his great weakness.

I had already covered a half-page as best I could; and if I had awakened earlier, I should have remembered other sentences; each one in turn seemed to me of great importance, sublime. I recall only the last one, which, having awakened, as I say, I felt the need of noting at once. Here it is: "Just an AH ago, we were literary clocks." I had interrupted him, not understanding very well; and, not daring to ask him what that meant, I found it more expedient to ask him how AH should be written. He replied at once, with some impatience:

"It doesn't matter: A or AH" . . . and I then understand that he was expressing a period of time. That meant: the time required to say: *a* (or *ah!*). As for the rest, I wrote it on trust, wondering whether he had said: *pendule*, or *pendu*, or *perdu*.²⁶ It was, in any case, admirable.

Nice, 2 October

Have ceased to keep this notebook up to date, all the time I was at Cuverville, entirely absorbed by writing my reflections on the U.S.S.R.²⁷ Written directly and rapidly, there is much to be criticized in them. Necessity for a preface to warn the reader at the outset.

These last two evenings spent with Roger Martin du Gard. Each new encounter consolidates and deepens our friendship. I like the fact that he has adopted to such a degree Pierre Herbart and Marc, both of whom get along with him marvelously. Since he questioned us yesterday about the new laws in the U.S.S.R. regarding homosexuality, the conversation is prolonged on this subject. We discuss the merits of that law. Does it really protect the family as it claims to do? I maintain that a libertine and debauched heterosexual can bring more trouble into a family than would a pederast. Herbart judiciously points out that the periods in which pederasty has been accepted seem in no wise to have been marked by a fall in the birth-rate.

I maintain that the man who looks upon woman exclusively as an instrument of pleasure and sees in her only a possible mistress is hardly

²⁶ The meaning would of course be very different, since *pendule* means clock, *pendu* means hanged man, and *perdu* means lost man.

²⁷ His *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* (*Return from the U.S.S.R.*), which came out in French in 1936.

eager to get her with child; and as I risk this (which is perhaps not so paradoxical as it may seem at first): that the married homosexual profits by having his wife occupied by pregnancy . . . Roger, with a huge laugh, exclaims that: "there is certainly not one in a thousand who ever thinks of that."

(The odd thing — but this reflection comes to me only subsequently — is that not for a moment did we envisage the question of lesbianism, which, however, might turn a woman away from maternity far more than would the homosexuality of a husband.) But if I note here, very incompletely, the gist of our conversation, which remained after all not very serious and merely skimmed a very grave subject, it is because of this reflection of this morning: Roger, for any psychological question whatsoever (and even, or especially, when functioning as a novelist), intentionally eliminates the exception, and even the minority. Whence a certain banalization of his characters. He is constantly asking himself: what takes place, in this given case, most generally? The "one in a thousand" does not claim his attention; or else it is to reduce this case to some great general law (in which, to be sure, he is right). But it is in order to discover that general law that the exception, quite on the contrary, concerns me, that it calls forth my most vigilant attention and that I consider it so instructive.

It is the taking into consideration of the exception (as I have already said) that leads to the most important discoveries: that of radium and radioactivity, for instance — or already that of the weight of air, when people deigned to notice that nature did not always "abhor a vacuum."

Volume XII of my *Œuvres complètes* has finally just appeared. From thirteen to fifteen volumes in all were foreseen. There will most likely be sixteen or seventeen. And still more if I continue to live and write. The subscribers will be, according to their mood, delighted or annoyed. The latter would have a right to protest, it seems to me, for they will find themselves committed to more than they were told to foresee. The last time I saw Malraux we discussed the problem at length and sought a solution likely to satisfy all and sundry.²⁸

Meanwhile the fear of cluttering that publication, which claims to be complete, with writings of a very different nature and in a way

²⁸ It was eventually decided to limit the edition to the fifteen volumes to which subscribers had committed themselves, with the possibility of later volumes, similar in format, to be sold separately. With Volume XV, moreover, substantially all of Gide's work published prior to 1932 (the date at which the publication of the *Complete Works* began) had been included — with the notable exception of *The School for Wives* and *Robert*, held over to be grouped with *Geneviève* of later date.

extra-literary, often withholds my pen. If they deserve to be gathered together in turn (and the subscribers have a right to ask for them), they will have to form a sort of appendix to my strictly literary work; which the subscribers would have a right to refuse — a supplementary volume which, on the other hand, could be sold separately. This would set me at ease once more and give my pen its freedom again.

Paris, 7 May

What has got into me this morning? This sudden desire to write anything whatever in this notebook. . . . Simply the night was a bit better. The preceding nights, atrocious. I should like to slip away among the Negroes; find a place where I could smile in freedom. The season is too advanced, I fear, for Morocco or Dakar. I deemed it reasonable not to give myself leave until after having finished my book. (Everything most absurd that I have done in life has always been done in the name of "reason.") And then I dared not get too far away from Cuverville. I took *Retouches*¹ to the N.R.F. last Tuesday. The week has only three work-days because of the Feast of the Ascension. Now I shall have to await the proofs. . . .

Yesterday evening I knocked about wildly from Clichy to Pigalle, then from Pigalle to Clichy, not making up my mind to dine before nine o'clock; then starting out again in pursuit of adventure, of pleasure, of surprise, and finding nothing but dullness, banality, and ugliness. Took the métro to get home; done in; but I was counting on fatigue to assure me a passable night; and, altogether, I succeeded.

I had taken along *Écuador*, which, after the exquisite quality of *La Nuit remue*, disappointed me.² Michaux was still groping there; now he writes with assurance; every word carries. But I did well to continue: from p. 127 onward it is much better (the voyage in a native canoe). Here and there, excellent.

What else did I want to say? Everything, now, seems to me a repetition. . . . And that preface to Thomas Mann's *Letter* that I promised to write!³ . . . Ah! I should like to shout "Pax" and step out of the game. My work-table (if I may use the expression) is not more encumbered than my brain. I should have held to my ethical system; it was good; but receptivity was a part of it; and now everything is upset to such a point, overturned and mixed up, that I haven't the heart for the task of putting everything back in place, and that, and that too. We are entering a new era, that of confusion.

Went to meet Élisabeth Herbart at the Gare Saint-Lazare (back

¹ *Retouches à mon Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* (*Afterthoughts on the U.S.S.R.*), which came out in 1937.

² Both *Ecuador* and *Night Stirs* are by the poet Henri Michaux.

³ Thomas Mann's letter in reply to the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Bonn, which had withdrawn his honorary degree, was published in French in 1937 with other essays under the title, *Avertissement à l'Europe* (*Warning to Europe*), prefaced by Gide; and in English (also 1937) as *An Exchange of Letters*.

from London). Nothing is more odious to me. With my infirmity of not recognizing anyone, I drift about, bump into anyone whatever with both heart and head, haggard, bewildered. And naturally I missed her. Returned home exasperated, ill.

Écuador suddenly becomes delectable from the native canoe on. "Although I speak more often of misfortune, I also have a lot of little enjoyments."

8 May

Mme Théo, led on by me, is rereading *Écuador*; she does not think the second part is to be preferred. Elisabeth comes home delighted with *Pépé-le-Moko*,⁴ which I told her I barely liked; and Pierre does not understand my severity in regard to *Les Bas Fonds*,⁵ which I consider unworthy of Renoir and which he is ready to consider excellent. I detest not being of the same opinion as the person with whom I am talking (given the fact that I talk only with friends) and don't give a hang for my own opinions. I yield at once; I acquiesce; I feel like begging pardon. Convinced at one and the same time that I am right and that . . . it would be enough to agree. I note that one is always of the same opinion when one has seen the same thing *together*. The least divergence of views vexes me, and ceasing to feel in agreement with. . . . It is said that opinions have no importance; yet it is important to know "with what one is dealing." I hate everything that divides men; and, as soon as I differ, would like to convince and win over. I am convinced that most divergences are the result of misunderstandings. Or else they are people from the other camp; and in this case nothing can be done about it. Nothing remains but to hit hard. It is atrocious.

I am rereading *The Man Who Was Thursday* (if it can be said that I ever read it).⁶ Much better than the recollection I had of it or what I thought it was. But I surrender with difficulty, lend myself only with the tip of my mind or heart, utterly concerned, mortgaged by something else; still but partially free from my book and the preoccupations it involves. I rail against the bores who besiege me, against the petty daily obligations; and, as soon as I am free of them and at liberty, do

⁴ The film by Julien Duvivier based on a play by Henri Jeanson, with Jean Gabin, Mireille Balin, Line Noro, etc., which was released in Paris in 1937. The same story was filmed in Hollywood as *Algiers*, with Charles Boyer.

⁵ A realistic film by Jean Renoir based on Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, starring Jean Gabin, Suzy Prim, Louis Jouvet, etc. It was released in Paris in December 1936.

⁶ By G. K. Chesterton. Gide gives the title in French.

not know what to do; and would like to sleep, to sleep still more, all day long. I do not even have any eyes for spring, which is taking place without me, before I have finished correcting my proofs. I have forgotten how to live. . . . I used to know so well!

Cuverville, 13 May

Faithless, I have not been able to oblige myself to keep this notebook up to date. And yet I was counting on it to get me *out of my indifference*.

I have given my book to the printer; I have already received the proofs. I ought to feel liberated. I keep repeating this to myself; but all those preoccupations of yesterday still inhabit me and I take no interest in anything else. I cannot manage to disengage my mind. As soon as I am not absorbed by some precise occupation, I feel vague, wandering idly. I should like to forget everything; live for a long time among naked Negroes, people whose language I didn't know and who didn't know who I am; and fornicate savagely, silently, at night, with anyone whatever, on the sand. . . .

I see nothing but distress, disorder, and madness everywhere; but justice mocked, but the right betrayed, but falsehood. And I wonder what life could still bring me that matters. What does all this mean? What is it all going to lead to, and the rest? Into what an absurd mess humanity is sinking! How and where to escape?

But how beautiful the last rays were this evening, gilding the beech grove! . . . Alas, for the first time I am not associating myself with the spring! And now, those pathetic songs of birds, in the night. . . .

14 May

I did well to write those lines, yesterday. It purged me. This evening I feel quite reconciled with the universe and with myself.

Cuverville, 6 June

Doubtless it is fitting to be suspicious of that illusion (for I really believe it is one) that the last years of a life may be devoted to a more active pursuit of God. With the progressive dulling of the senses, a sort of stupor numbs the whole being; and since the outer world loses its luster and its solicitations, the impetus wanes; some dull indifference or other reduces the soul, all shorn of its branches already like those trees the woodsman plans to fell.

"Since always" . . . It seems to me that it is Verlaine who first risked that abuse. I cannot just now recall the line in which that abuse

was charming; attractive to such a point that, since, it has been constantly repeated, and without any poetic justification.⁷

In this sentence of de Man, for instance: "The difference between the hand of the worker and the hand of the non-worker has *since always* been one of the most frequent symbols of the distinction between the classes," I do not see that the "since" adds anything to the "always," which would suffice. And I believe that it is the same almost everywhere else. Nothing so irritates me as this soiling of the exquisite and the rare. (Moreover, I am not holding it against de Man; he is merely following the fashion, certainly without knowing it. But precisely, when one sees a mind as honest as his letting itself be contaminated, one can judge the extent of the evil.)

*Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled,
Since sweating lust on earth usurp'd his name.*

(*Venus and Adonis*, 793.)

Cuvernville, 26 June

I should like all the same for Massis to explain to me, once and for all, the meaning of this remark of Claudel which he admires and quotes and requotes apropos of me: "Evil does not compose." Though I turn the sentence over in all directions, I cannot succeed in making it cling to anything. I still don't know in what sense to take the word *compose*. Perhaps it doesn't mean anything; but it apes profundity, and, faced with that utterance, one remains nonplussed. It appears that I am to see in it the condemnation of my work. This is doubtless what Massis calls a "Judgment."⁸

27 June

To feel oneself an exceptional being; I sobbed with fright when I first made that discovery, but I had to resign myself to it, and already I had sufficiently accepted the exceptional not to be very much surprised when I had to become aware of it likewise in sexual matters. No, my surprise came rather, later on, from discovering that, in this domain at least, the exceptional (I mean: what was presented to me as such) was, after all, rather frequent.

The feeling of the exceptional I experienced, still quite young, upon noting that often I did not react as others did; as the common run of others. And try as one might later on to humiliate oneself, to depreciate oneself, to want to be vulgar, to refuse oneself to every distinction, to try to melt into the mass and like it, one remains none the less a crea-

⁷ It has not been possible to identify this line.

⁸ Massis's volumes of criticism, in the second of which he disposes of Gide, are entitled *Jugements*.

ture apart. That feeling of differentiation the child may feel while still very young and by turns with sorrow, even with anguish, and very rarely with joy.

28 June

I see less well and my eyes become tired more quickly. I hear likewise less well. I tell myself that it is probably not bad that there should withdraw from us progressively an earth one would have too much trouble leaving — that one would have too much trouble leaving all at once. The wonderful thing would be, at the same time, to get progressively nearer to . . . something else.

30 June

Nothing more useless than that thirst for education which still torments me. If I could break with that habit of thinking that my time is wasted as soon as I remain unoccupied! That unrelieved recourse to the thought of others, partly through fear of being left alone with mine, is a form of laziness. I even come to congratulate myself on the weakness of my eyes, which will soon refuse too constant readings.

2 July

The pressure of the accumulated liquor demanded from the brain licentious images. I have great trouble today imagining anything whatever that is exalting. Reality must provoke me; my pretense will not take the initiative.

3 July

There comes a time when everything becomes simply too complicated. By dint of pulling threads from one point to another, of establishing rapports, interdependences, relationships, the least progress of the mind in this canvas upsets so many grounds of judgment that it remains suspended, motionless, and would like to quit the game, begin all over again, not know. . . . And I recall that as a child I took out some of the bits of glass from my kaleidoscope in order to get less complicated arabesques. It is partly their simplicity that makes the so pure beauty of the Gospel words: "Why art thou disturbed?"

Cuerville, 4 July

It is ten p.m. The day is just ending. I hear the last sounds of the farm. And now everything is going to sleep in a great silence. The bird that was singing so suavely a few moments ago has become silent. I tell myself every day, at all times, that I have probably not much more time to live. The thought of death hardly ever leaves me; it inhabits me without saddening me.

5 July

Without any pedantry, couldn't one demand of the radio "announcers" that they speak correctly and do not spread abroad such faulty expressions as "*en terminer avec* . . ."?⁹

Reread aloud Hardy's *The Woodlanders* and Balzac's *Catherine de Médicis*; to myself, the wonderful *Turn of the Screw* by Henry James, of which I had, moreover, a very precise memory.

Finished Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. A few passages of very annoying rhetoric, a concession to the taste of the time, scarcely mar the wonderful richness of the poem. Yet Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* seems to me, if my memory is exact, of an even much superior poetic virtue. I must reread it.

How can one fail to feel, in both poems, a burning breath of sensuality? But *Venus and Adonis* has the reputation of being "artificial and cold," for it is especially the beauty of Adonis that Shakespeare sings and seems in love with.

Cuverville, 6 July

Every evening, after the "good night," once having retired to the big bedroom, I remain for a long time seated in an armchair without doing anything. Ordinarily I used to read until rather far into the night; but my eyes are tired and the light is insufficient. Consequently I let my thought drift at random; and I call that meditating. I have no further projects in mind; not a one left; and that *disoccupation* of my thought is painful to me. I have always liked work and found pleasure in effort. Perhaps (but it cannot be here where nothing urges me to want anything) I shall still enjoy some new impulse toward some end, some work to be done . . . but I tell myself at times, often, that I have now said what I had to say and that my cycle is accomplished. This is partly what will make me take leave without too much trouble.

Out of harmony with his time — this is what gives the artist his *raison d'être*. And this is why I can hardly admit that he should have no other representative value save as a reflection. He counteracts; he initiates. And this is partly why he is often understood at first by but a few.

7 July

I return to Paris tomorrow morning. I no longer leave any place, henceforth, even Cuverville, except as if I were never to return.

⁹ This means "to finish with," but the *en* is tautological.

12 July

Invited to the last rehearsal of Cocteau's play.¹⁰ At the entrance the superelegant appearance of the audience made me flee; the smiles especially, the bows. . . . The next day I read in the papers that, having arrived too late, I had had to go away, not having found a seat.

Sorrento, 5 August

Nobility, grace, and voluptuousness. For here no softness accompanies the *joie de vivre*. Through the exuberance of the vines man's effort and the triumph of the mind can be seen everywhere. On no other soil, probably, is there a happier marriage of vegetation and daring architecture, where often nothing but the festooning of the vine-shoots tempers with a smile an excess of severity. *Nobility*: this word haunts me in Italy — where the most sensual caress is related to spirituality.

I like even this tuff at Sorrento; and these deep breaks, these crevasses which must have a special name in geology, that I should like to know. They are due, it seems to me, not so much to erosion (although a little water is always flowing at the bottom of the abyss) as to some sudden seismic split. The walls are abrupt like those of the latomy, at the foot of which there is the same luxurious growth. But it seems, rather, that the earth opens, as a pomegranate bursts, by the very effect of the heat.

I have never yet been able to tell either all I owe to Italy or how much I was and still am in love with her.

The buildings, the walls along the roads, are covered with inscriptions in huge characters; appeals to the Duce and quotations from him, perfect slogans, wonderfully chosen and likely to galvanize youth, to enroll it. Among all such, these three words: *Believe. Obey. Fight*, return most frequently as if conscious of summing up the very spirit of the Fascist doctrine. This allows a certain sharpness of ideas and at the same time points out to me the "positions" of anti-Fascism. And nothing leads to greater confusion than the adoption of this slogan by Communism itself, which claims to be still anti-Fascist, but is so only politically, for it too asks the party members to *believe, obey, and fight*, without inquiry, without criticism, with blind submission. Three quarters of the Italian inscriptions would be just as suitable to the walls of Moscow. I am told that an adversary can be overcome only on the same ground, only by his very arms, that it is appropriate to fight the sword with the sword (something of which I am, moreover, in no wise convinced). It is appropriate first of all and above all to fight

¹⁰ *Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde* (*The Knights of the Round Table*), presented at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre.

the spirit with the spirit, and this is what is scarcely ever done any more. Historians of the future will examine how and why, the end disappearing behind the means, the Communist spirit ceased to be opposed to the Fascist spirit, and even to be differentiated from it.

7 August

Life for me loses all meaning, all charm, if I can no longer make progress. But I must accept not trying too much to educate myself. Progress through education belongs properly to youth; it is doubtless good to learn how to renounce that progress, provided one does so in favor of another, deeper, truer progress.

9 August

The need Pascal¹¹ has of making man despair and of undermining his joys with the sole purpose of precipitating his conversion, that systematic depreciation of the gratuitous, of art ("what a vanity is painting . . ."), of everything that distracts man from the necessity of death — strikes me as much more fruitless than pleasure itself. How much wiser seems to me Hebbel's witticism: "What is the best thing the rat can do when caught in a trap? — Eat the bacon."

Just as fruitless seem to me Mauriac's considerations regarding Lawrence and what a Lady Chatterley may well become in old age.¹² If I have any remorse today, it is indeed for not having taken better advantage of my youth. When pleasure invited me, I used to refuse my body to harmony; it was only much later, only too late, that I understood what a reliable guide is desire. I used to localize God in a certain suprasensual region, inaccessible or almost, toward which I tended with an Alpinist's ambition, and grace was not vouchsafed me.

Goethe was a great help to me, and botany. It is odd that Catholicism, so ready to point out pride as soon as man wanders from the teachings of the Church, does not deign to see that same pride in resistance and refractoriness to natural laws. And why not dare say, as Catholicism did for Descartes: "I cannot forgive Pascal." That he should wail is all right; his wailings are very beautiful; but that he should want to force us to wail; that he should go so far as to write:

¹¹ Whose *Pensées* Robert Levesque is reading, beside me, in the new edition of the *N.R.F.* [A.]

¹² In an article entitled "*Eros*," first published in *Le Figaro* and later reprinted in the first volume of his *Journal*, François Mauriac asks: "In twenty or thirty years, what will Lady Chatterley do with her game-warden? Will they continue the same gesture until death? When satiety comes, aged, ignoble, they will seek to feed elsewhere that lust too skillfully exercised not to go on dominating during decrepitude. I think of that dreadful book: *The Old Age of Lady Chatterley*."

"I can approve only those who, wailing, seek," is not this enough to make one exclaim that one approves only those who find; who find with shouts of joy?

22 August

I always read Abel Hermant with very keen interest. The article by him in this morning's *Figaro* is debatable.

"If Flaubert had lived until the present," he says, "he would certainly laugh at our 'slogans,' since he had for ready-made phrases, which we now call *slogans* in the American way, a peculiar dislike." The slogan is not exactly "a ready-made phrase"; it was originally a "war cry" capable of gathering the people of one party. Today the word designates any concise formula whatever, easy to remember because of its brevity and likely to strike the mind. Such are those remarks of Mussolini that cover the walls in Italy. Flaubert would perhaps have admired those formulas; what enraged him was seeing people accept them without verification. But the slogan does not necessarily offer a refuge for the commonplace. St. François de Sales's remark that Massis noted, is a slogan: "There is no ready-made saintliness," as is Malraux's sentence: "Culture is not inherited; it is won." And Flaubert would have approved them, for he had it in for the "ready-made," for everything that is achieved without fighting, or, still more precisely, for laziness, and whatever favors it.

Flaubert's slogan: "I call a bourgeois whoever thinks vulgarly" seems to me to go considerably beyond the meaning that Abel Hermant attributes to it. If I were to comment upon it, I should say, in Flaubert's name: little do I care about the "social classes"! There may be "bourgeois" just as well among the nobles as among workmen and the poor. I recognize the bourgeois not by his costume and his social level, but by the level of his thinking, and, for the sake of simplicity, I shall call a *bourgeois* "whoever thinks vulgarly." And if Flaubert, in another slogan that Abel Hermant quotes likewise, adds: "The bourgeois has a hatred of literature," I see in this remark (much less of a "slogan" than the first), not what Abel Hermant sees in it: "Flaubert called a bourgeois whoever did not like what he was producing," but rather: the *bourgeois* (that is, whoever thinks vulgarly) has a hatred of the gratuitous, of the disinterested, of everything he cannot put to use. He could not accept any art or literature that was not utilitarian, and hates everything he cannot rise to the point of understanding.

24 August

When one has formed a false idea of someone and that person subsequently acts and speaks and writes in such a way as to contradict

that original false impression one had formed of him, one is much more likely to accuse him of hypocrisy than to recognize that one was mistaken about him.

26 August

I experience again a childlike joy without regard for the hour and to my heart's delight at the exhibit on the Quai de Tokio.¹³ A triptych by Louis Bréa; wonderful left-hand panel: St. Martin (what a face!) cutting his mantle in two for a poor man.

A *Pietà* attributed to Fouquet (from the church of Nouans); then some Poussins — particularly the one, so perfect in composition, from the Hermitage. *The Intoxication of Anacreon*, a replica of the one I had seen at Dulwich (still better, as far as I can remember), of which I should like to have a reproduction in my study, if only I could manage to spend some time there. What a modern absurdity, that distaste for or fear of the "Subject" in painting! The subject is the composition of the painting. Paul Desjardins had excellent things to say about this.¹⁴

Already satiated, I merely hastened rapidly through the modern rooms. I managed to feel joyfully a force of attraction, of contemplation, of absorption, as in the best time of my youth.

Cuverville, 1 September

Reread with rapture the last six books of the *Iliad* in the Giguet translation (which I had forgotten having here and which now seems to me preferable to the one by Leconte de Lisle; more natural.) What savagery! But beauty constantly clothes and seems to sanctify the cruelty, the horror. The god of Love, son of Venus, does not appear in the *Iliad* but only in the *Aeneid*. Giguet, in a "human encyclopedia" he appends to his translation, says under the word *Love*: "Much less ardent passion than that of friendship." An uncompromising heterosexual could not be really sensitive to Greece. Nietzsche understood this very well, and said it. And the Hellenists who lack that sense are pedants.

3 September

The great secret of Stendhal, his great shrewdness, consisted in writing *at once*. His thought charged with emotion remains as lively, as fresh in color as the newly developed butterfly that the collector has surprised as it was coming out of the cocoon. Whence that element

¹³ On the Quai de Tokio (renamed in 1945 Quai de New York) stands the New Museum of Modern Art.

¹⁴ See Gide's "Few Reflections on the Disappearance of the Subject in Sculpture and Painting" in *Verve*, 1937.

of alertness and spontaneity, of incongruity, of suddenness and nakedness, that always delights us anew in his style. It would seem that his thought does not take time to put on its shoes before beginning to run. This ought to serve as a good example; or rather: I ought to follow his good example more often. One is lost when one hesitates. The work of translating, for this, does a disservice. Dealing with someone else's thought, it is important to warm it, to clothe it, and one goes seeking the best words, the best turn of expression; one becomes convinced that there are twenty ways of saying anything whatever and that one of them is preferable to all the others. One gets into that bad habit of dissociating form from content, the emotion and the expression of the emotion from the thought, which ought to remain inseparable.

For instance, I should like to say just now that: "If others wrote less, I should have more enjoyment in writing." . . . Well, I've said it! Why should I look for anything better than this sentence? It is the first one that came to mind; it expresses my thought perfectly. But my mind goes over it again and again, examines, criticizes it, and tries to perform upon it that little operation of weathering, of destruction, that it is better to leave to time, which will take care of it. And in saying this I myself fall into that fault with which I am reproaching others.

What more would I like to express? That this superabundance of written matter, of printed matter, stifles me and that in Paris, where it all piles up, overflowing the insufficient bookshelves onto tables, chairs, the floor even and everywhere, my thought can no longer get in motion, nor breathe. I am like Pompeii under the rain of ashes; and do not want, by writing myself, to add to it. When I happen at times to open one of these new books, it almost always seems to me that modicum of truth and novelty it brings would improve by being said more briefly — or might not be said at all. So that, when the desire to write seizes me, I hesitate and wonder: is it really worth saying? Have not others said it before me? Have I not already said it myself? And I keep silent.

9 September

Busy all these last few days with the translation of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The work I had done, at the request of Ida Rubinstein,¹⁵ to reduce the number of sets (and consequently of scenes) I must now undo, like seams, to link the scenes together, fill the lacunæ, etc. . . . Frightfully disturbed by correspondence, as always. After the *Iliad*, I went back to the *Æneid* again, quite surprised to understand Latin so well, at least all the parts I had studied in my childhood.

¹⁵ That original translation of Shakespeare's tragedy, begun in 1917, was published in 1921.

I believe that students would be made much more rapidly sensitive to the scansion of Latin verse if they were accustomed to take into account merely the accents, without trying to break the line artificially into dactyls and spondees. It is important to find and to feel six "strong beats"; all the rest, afterward, follows naturally.

Read a number of poems by Donne.

In Descartes's correspondence (letter to Balzac,¹⁶ April 1631): "I sleep here [Amsterdam] ten hours every night, without any anxiety ever waking me . . ." (the rest of the long sentence is marvelous). Elsewhere he speaks (letter to Mersenne, 11 October 1638) of the "violence of sleep" — of his sleep; and I envy him. When I have slept eight hours, I feel fit for work, ready for anything whatever; I have genius. . . . But how rare such nights are! Nights like fountains of youth, in which one really rests.

During the last few days, great efforts, great struggles, great anxieties. . . . I have not got even a micromillimeter closer to God; I have got closer only to death.

12 October

The ideas one gathers in conversations or books (many people have no others) sometimes grow in us like grafts. It even happens that they develop in much greater profusion (see Aldous Huxley) than those born of our own blood.

At Rouen, when I was a child, there lived the niece of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore. She was named Mme Richard and vegetated miserably while doing tutoring. She spoke very little of her aunt, but often of a brother, whom no one saw and for whom she professed an extraordinary admiration. She used to say:

"My brother has calculated that if the whole of the public wealth were shared equally among all men, each one would get only thirty centimes. You understand that this is not worth the trouble."

This is the reasoning she opposed to socialism.

English horticulturists send us their catalogues. Under "Sweet peas" one reads descriptions of astounding varieties. One is named: *Venus*; another that is even better: *Venus improved*.¹⁷

23 October

I cannot consent to consider this declining season less beautiful — despite what the tree losing its leaves might think, modest actor in a vast ensemble. Listen to this invitation to meditation, to death. Melt into this harmony.

¹⁶ This is, of course, Jean Guez de Balzac.

¹⁷ The italicized names are in English in the text.

25 October

All these young people from whom I receive letters begging encouragement or counsel do not imagine (that is their excuse) the time it takes to answer them. They imagine even less that the book they are keeping you from writing would answer them, and many others at the same time. But each of them would like an individual reply to questions that are not individual at all.

Cuverville, 30 October

What keeps me from writing now is not lassitude, it is disgust.

8 December

I do not like funerals and generally flee them; but I wanted to be present at the funeral ceremony for Harry von Kessler. It took place yesterday at the Protestant chapel in rue de Passy, where Pastor Boegner made a very dignified speech. I was greatly astonished not to see in the church, nor later to accompany the body to the cemetery, any of the painters and sculptors whom Kessler had so generously helped during his life. On the other hand, it was not without emotion that I encountered J.-É. Blanche. He has the kindness not to harbor any resentment against me for my withdrawals and is charmingly affable toward me, as always. I think with sadness, now that our lives are drawing to a close, that I responded very poorly to the affection he never ceased to show me; that I set down in my journal only my bursts of moodiness (of bad moodiness) when faced with an existence overflowing with advantages, when faced with the excess of his assurance and his concern for his ease. But whoever knew him only from what I have said of him would judge him very poorly; I have given but the shadows in his portrait. I try to understand what kept me from frequenting him more, as he always invited me to do: I believe it is the approval I granted, through weakness, to his rejections. I did not hold it against him, but against myself; through affection, I used to let myself be drawn where I did not want to go. In talking with him I took only too much pleasure, but a pleasure too easily resented, or which, at least, I resented too much; a rich man's pleasure.

Cuverville, 13 December

This morning, opening my shutters on awaking, the wonder of the snow. It has already somewhat carpeted the ground and is falling in rather large flakes. "Frightful weather," says X., who only one day out of ten finds weather more or less to his liking; and I then quote to him the Belgian's remark: "Well, it's better than no weather at all."

It seems to me that it is merely up to man to have occasion to rejoice more often at being on earth. And it is not only that I resign

myself to "taking the weather as it comes"; when I am in the country, I cannot find ugliness in a storm, a shower, the wind, the tempest, and do not wait for the sky to be cloudless in order to admire it.

14 December

La Marche nuptiale is being revived at the Comédie-Française.¹⁸ The critics express amazement: "How it has aged!" Henriot writes in *Le Temps*: "It takes revivals to reveal false masterpieces." But allow me: there are some of us who were struck by the falseness of Bataille's plays from the very outset and who never considered them as "masterpieces"; some who have always thought and said, against the whole world, what you are noticing today. But rather than admit that you had made a mistake by taking such chaff for wheat, you prefer to write: "It is odd how this drama has aged!" It is not at all odd and the drama of Bataille (or Brieux) has not changed; simply, as in the case of Dumas *fil's* drama the day before yesterday, you let yourself be taken in.

"Each soul is worth another," Guéhenno proclaimed. My heart and my mind are opposed to that ruinous dictum. I see in it moreover much less modesty, much less assimilation of the humblest to oneself, than pride, than assimilation of oneself to the greatest, or lowering of the greatest to oneself.

15 December

"The imagination imitates. It is the critical spirit that creates," said Wilde (in *Intentions*); of all Wilde's aphorisms there is none that seems more paradoxical at first and less worthy of being taken into consideration. By defending it, one runs the risk of passing for a sophist oneself. What was my astonishment, my joy, to find, most unexpectedly, this same profound and fecund truth when thumbing at random through Diderot's *Œuvres complètes* — and set forth by him almost in the same terms: "Imagination creates nothing; it *imitates*."¹⁹ I took pleasure in quoting this sentence opposite Wilde's paradox in an article on "the forsaking of the subject in the plastic arts." This morning, opening the first number of the sumptuous review *Verve*, in which that article appears, my eyes fall at once on the sentence: "Imagination creates nothing; it *invents*." A zealous proofreader, too zealous, thought he was doing right to correct a text that was obviously faulty in his eyes.

It is related that Rosny, exasperated by the typographical errors

¹⁸ *The Wedding March*, a popular play by Henry Bataille, first produced in 1905.

¹⁹ *Salon de 1767* (Assézat edition, Vol. XI, p. 131). [A.]

that the printers made or let slip by, wrote a vengeful article entitled: "*Mes Coquilles*." When the next day Rosny opened his newspaper, he read with stupefaction, in heavy type, this odd title: "MES COUILLES." A negligent or malicious printer had let the *q* drop out. . . .²⁰

I am writing this to console myself.

Marcel Drouin gives me a remarkable speech (or at least the fragments printed by *Le Journal des débats* of 21 December) by Leclainche, at the Academy of Sciences (18 or 19 December). I note in it: "If an exclusive racial doctrine presents but a passing ideology, among those that disturb men, the permanent question of race remains up before science and it contains all the future of humanity. Its study would be greatly facilitated if ethnologists and anthropologists deigned to recognize that the consideration of extra-somatic documents, from which the racist doctrine is born, has been of no use in the diagnosis of races and *even made it totally impossible*." This is what happens in the study of any problem whatever when the very elements of the problem are distorted by any considerations whatever of ethics, of religion, of politics, or of *utility*.

DETACHED PAGES

I

(Recovered Pages)

Of all the "great authors" (I can employ this term without smiling), those who have taught me the least, doubtless, are the French. And how could it be otherwise? I have them in my blood, in my brain; even before reading them, I was made of them. They are of the same stuff as I. I can learn to reason with Descartes; if I reason differently, it will seem to me that I am indulging in nonsense. But certain people do not reason at all, which nevertheless live. Reasonable and reasoning I am irremediably, willy-nilly; whatever I do, my mind assimilates nothing that has not first passed the toll-house of my reason. But what I want to get by, oh! without fraud, are foreign matters that my own country does not produce spontaneously.



La Bruyère's "everything has been said" long benumbed France.²¹ Even today the great majority of Frenchmen believe that nothing remains but to repeat and that "the whole of man" is to *repeat* better

²⁰ "*Mes Coquilles*" means "My Misprints" whereas "*Mes Couilles*" means "My Balls."

²¹ See pp. 331-2.

and better, something, to be sure, of which the French acquit themselves more readily than any other people in the world and from which they draw great pride. And the worst is that La Bruyère's remark follows the direction of our race and flatters a natural disposition to the point of not allowing one to distinguish what is the native share and of making one wonder whether the Frenchman could have done much better with a different permission, listening to another counsel. No matter! I cannot keep from believing that the best education is not the one that favors one's penchants and that a somewhat vigorous nature, such as ours, finds advantage in opposition, in constraint.

Since leaving childhood behind, I have been bumping into this judgment of La Bruyère's and have never ceased rising up against it. But my protest is fed today by other much graver considerations which I want to try to set forth, though suspecting the slight welcome they can hope for in France. French through and through, I am yet speaking as a Frenchman unable to admit the discredit that France so often seems eager to deserve.

That man has made himself what he is, what pride! That a God made man, what devotion! But what matter? The important thing is that man was achieved (were it even by God) only slowly, progressively. This is what is repugnant to all religion and particularly to the Catholic religion. I read just yesterday this impertinent assertion that "a certain degree of knowledge was attained at the earliest time when man began to think" and, as an immediate corollary, obviously, that that degree "cannot be surpassed." The most terrifying thing is that this assertion is presented as "dwelling in the consciousness of every Frenchman"; the most saddening thing is that there are indeed very few Frenchmen who do not accept it. And Gourmont himself, elsewhere so perspicacious and so resolutely atheistic, maintains this disconcerting thesis: that no less genius was required to invent thread or the needle than to discover the laws of gravitation or the transmission of waves. And this, if I am willing to admit it, merely carries the problem back beyond the time when needle and thread, when man himself, were not yet invented. But Gourmont starts from this in order to try to establish a so-called law of intellectual *constancy* which would forbid man's ever having been less intelligent (I was about to write: less a *man*) than he is today; not seeing that such a claim remains irreconcilable with the doctrines of evolution that he professes; for after all, if man has always been what he now is, one is forced to admit that he issued complete from the hand of a Creator.



There are no human virtues that I esteem as much or as little, according to the circumstances, as courage.

"True courage," said Napoleon, "is that of three a.m." He meant thereby, probably, that the courage he esteemed was that from which all intoxication, all vanity, all emulation were excluded. A courage without witnesses and without accomplices; courage when sober and on an empty stomach.

All this enters in and often I see less real courage than vanity and vainglory in certain parades in white gloves and plumes under the enemy fire; I even hold that whoever resists such a collective example would reveal himself as authentically courageous, for he would have the courage to appear to lack courage. Indeed, for the great majority of false heroes, *appearances* are enough; if one is taken for courageous one doesn't have to be so.

I cannot esteem the courage that is due, as so often happens, merely to a lack of imagination, just as fear is very often the result of an excessive imagination. Likewise the courage that comes merely from the feeling of one's physical superiority. It is easy to strut when you have muscles of steel. The cat venturing out on the branch without trembling is less aware of the void beneath him than of the nestful of little birds he is after; above all he is counting on his claws, which will keep him from falling. Before admiring the one who risks his life, I should like to be sure that he values it. So many young fellows, during the war, saw in the fact of risking their life a unique opportunity of winning some glory! Just imagine all of a sudden, among them, a person who feels himself to be the possessor of some secret message which, if he lives, will soon be a great boon to all the others; would not the truest courage, for him, be trying to preserve that secret? I am told that Péguy offered himself to death in a sort of despair, and "to simplify matters"; for, to be sure, continuing to live often calls for a rather complex courage. I know another, quite young, who got himself killed during the first days of fighting through fear of not acting courageously.



I had rather early put myself on guard against the notions that I owed to habits inculcated by my parents, to my Protestant formation, to my country even; not at all that I had a prejudice that they were bad, but at least I intended not to readmit them until after having proved their excellence myself, after having made them appear before me, compared to others, weighing them in my critical scales and assuring myself that they rang true.

I did not become aware until much later, and even only very recently, that many of those notions — I mean of those that I had admitted after examining them — were the product, often indirect, of my social condition, of the favors of fate (which had caused me to be born

in a well-off, comfortable situation, sheltered from material worries), of the society in which I had lived, to which my parents belonged, and, to state it more simply: of my *class*. This word, just a short while ago, meant very little to me. I knew men to be more or less well-to-do and, my inclination taking me toward the least favored, I had scarcely had any but poor friends — that is to say, obliged to earn their living, and often very painfully. None the less, problems of a social nature hardly interested me, and my mind deigned to take a fancy to and concern itself only with the problems that seemed to me common to all men. And doubtless I had first to recognize how bad was a form of society that guarantees the happiness of a few privileged people at the expense of the majority's poverty in order to become aware that many of those notions I had admitted and considered acceptable, over which my mind labored, had taken shape thanks to that inequality and belonged themselves to a system that seemed to me worthy to be condemned. I did not condemn those notions at the same time, for to some of them I owed my art and what constituted in my eyes my *raison d'être*; but at least they seemed to me suspect and I began to look at them askance, and especially those that flattered my class, those in which the bourgeois class could find support, comfort, and justification.

My most severe scrutiny was directed toward any notion from which I might have some advantage. I had a sort of cantankerous predilection in doing so; yes, a reverse predilection. But even this critical work, as I must recognize, remained bourgeois, and I am well aware that, less favored, I should not have been able to undertake it. This is indeed partly, I thought, why those of the working class so easily accept others' ideas; why so often (some say: always) incitement to revolution comes from the bourgeois class, even though addressed to the masses and unable to prosper without them.



There is doubtless in Rousseau's theories less paradox and madness than people enjoy saying. The unfortunate thing is that they were theories and that sometimes passion prompted them. I cannot believe that man, as he claims, is "naturally good." The taste, the need, the very sense of truth are not to be found either in children or in primitive peoples. That utopia in the past dangerously distorts any project, any prefiguration of the future. But how can one fail to admit, and precisely because they fashion man and educate him, that civilization is responsible for many a downfall, society for many a wasting away? Man is to be made, to become, and that *good man* (not "naturally good," but a product, but a work of culture and art) — the great griev-

ance against society is for having done so little, labored so ineffectively to achieve him.

What I especially do not like in Rousseau is his esteem for ignorance. The misuse man has made of the discoveries of science is not enough to incriminate science, but man himself who misuses it.

It goes without saying; and if the fire burns us, we shall not put it out merely for that reason.

What I blame Rousseau for is speaking of "laws of nature" when it is a matter of human affairs. Natural laws cannot be modified; there is nothing that man institutes, there is nothing human, that cannot be modified — beginning (or rather: ending) with man himself.



I cannot set up against Christ that proud and jealous resistance of Nietzsche. When he speaks of Christ, his marvelous perspicacity seems to me to fail him; yes, truly, he seems to me to accept an already second-hand and distorted image of Christ, and, in order to oppose him better, to hold Christ responsible for all the clouds and all the shadows projected on this earth by the sorry misinterpretation of his words.

I feel in Christ's teaching as much emancipatory power as in Nietzsche's; as much opposition between the value of the individual and the state, or civilization, or "Cæsar"; as much abnegation and joy. What am I saying: as much? I discover still more, and a more profound and more secret opposition; more assured and, hence, calmer; more complete and, hence, less tense, in the Gospel of Christ than in the Gospel of Zarathustra. Nietzsche is much closer to Christ than was Goethe, for instance (or Hölderlin), in whom I feel the pagan values of ancient Greece standing quite naïvely and spontaneously in opposition to the truly Christian values (I mean: those of Christ himself and not of the Church); much closer than he knew himself or was willing to admit. This is also, indeed, why the things it pleases Nietzsche to discover in Greece are that very dissatisfaction and that sacred disequilibrium in which Christianity will find its authorization, its motivation, its *raison d'être*. What he sees in Greek culture is Dionysus, whereas Goethe is on the side of Apollo. It belonged to Nietzsche to rediscover under the winding-sheets and resuscitate a true Christ, but, rather than rally to Him whose teaching surpassed his own, Nietzsche thought to increase his stature by opposing Him. He resolutely misunderstands Christ; but for this misunderstanding, which is to be his springboard, the Church is, even more than he, responsible; by annexing, by trying (in vain moreover) to assimilate Christ, instead of assimilating herself to Him, she cripples Him more — and it is this crippled Christ that Nietzsche is fighting.

There remains, still and despite everything, so much superhuman truth in the establishment of the Church that the guileless can be deceived and approach God through this channel to the point of ceasing to contemplate anything but God himself. But just as Christ told us: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," the Church would like us not to be able to reach Christ save through her. . . .



How many questions that passionately interested the world, that seemed, in their time, vital, seem idle to us today, not because they have been solved, but because they have collapsed; yes, collapsed to the point where we can understand but very dimly how such chalk could ever be taken for cheese.



To some new converts:

"I shall speak without irony. If I tell you that I am grateful to you, this is because, in truth, you have taught me much. I have understood why I cannot, and will not, join you. My heart inclined me to do so, and that affection I bore you was one of the great weaknesses of my life. I feared, I repressed every impulse of my thought that might have hurt you; I even got to the point of not daring to breathe. We have talked interminably; you knew my integrity; I am grateful to you for never having questioned it. We have discussed; I am not clever in defending myself; and, besides, you did not even attack me: simply you sought to lead me to think like you, since you had begun to think like the others, to cease thinking freely. You asked me to accept what you had accepted yourself, which seemed to me falsehood and seemed to you Truth. It rather soon appeared to me that we could never understand one another. You accused my resistance of pride and this allowed you to condemn it. You became irritated when I told you: 'I am leaving you the last word,' for it seemed to you then that, as is said in fencing, I was giving ground. Well, yes; I want to give ground. What is the good of reasoning with someone who argues: the proof that I am right is that it is written: ". . ."? I too have fed myself on the Scriptures; if they taught me differently, this, you say, is because I interpreted them. The proof that I was wrong is that, agreeing with the Church, you could not be wrong. You called your way of thinking orthodoxy, outside of which one could not but reason wrongly; and bending to yourself the words that Pascal attributes to Christ, you made God say: in order to find me, give up seeking me. And at the same time you lodged that God in a Temple whose entrance you barred to whoever did not begin by submitting and by abdicating all

freedom of thought. The moment thought did not lead *there*, it was bad, and whoever thought otherwise was wrong. . . ."



No, it is not exactly a fashion, for fashion comes from the outside, though responding to unconscious inner demands. But I believe that the war left all minds in a semi-emotional disposition particularly vulnerable to that sort of contagion. Grievances, unwontedly grave reflections, particularly all those about the brevity and basic insecurity of life, certain despairs apparently insurmountable without supernatural aid, a great need for affection, the disuse, in the ordinary humdrum, of all the heroisms that war had brought to white heat, a need for abnegation, of proving one's nobility to oneself, of serving the public welfare, and of sacrificing to higher interests embarrassing peculiarities, of enlisting — yes, all this enters in, and many other things besides. It is a state of mind or of soul that the war created. A certain friend of mine amuses himself (and I find fault with him for it) by considering our new converts as "gassed men." And what I find fault with is being amused by it; but I believe he is right to consider all these conversions as by-products of the war (including my *Numquid et tu . . . ?*). For there is not one of these converts whose mind did not contain some fissure (which a somewhat subtle and searching psychological examination always allows one to discover) through which the mystical gas could penetrate. Add to this the fact that, in this new state, each *neo* finds his advantage; and if one is quite surprised to encounter in each of them all his most shocking original shortcomings, one learns that they ceased to be shortcomings since he began offering them to the Lord; so that each of them never felt more himself, the proud man more proud since he is proud in the name of that Truth he henceforth possesses, the wrathful man since his wrath is holy, and the simpleton since he has recognized the pitfalls of intelligence and given up to his superiors the care of having thought for him. So it is for each of them. There are excellent ones among them; they were excellent in the past; they have the modesty to believe that they owe that excellence to their conversion. Those exquisite souls find their place here without admitting to themselves that, under any banner, they would have been exquisite; but I cannot judge their religion according to them; simply: that religion suits them and probably better than any other. What warns me, amazes me, is that the tree can also bear such frightful fruit. For, there is no gainsaying it, it is that tree that bears them, and in order for that tree to be able to bear such fruit, there must be something bad in its sap; and was it not You Yourself, O Lord, who taught me to judge the tree by its fruits?



There is a great misunderstanding between them and me, arising from the fact that they originally took me for a dilettante, a skeptic; it seemed to them that spiritual effort could lead only to faith and that what they called "spirituality" could not but be mystical. The soul that did not believe was asleep.

Now, my soul (I am borrowing this word from their lexicon) has remained fervent. I am not one of the lukewarm; I have passionately loved truth and it is not halfheartedly that I hate falsehood. As for them, I cannot hate them; on the contrary. But they are no more convinced of my error than I am convinced that they are wrong.

No discussion with them is possible. In regard to them, to their convictions, to their faith, we show a respect that they owe it to themselves, in the name of their faith, not to show in regard to our faith. Their assurance constitutes their strength; they deign to see nothing but pride in our resistance, but weakness in our caution. What is to us an indispensable virtue: intellectual honesty, is in their eyes but an obstacle to belief, which it behooves them to overcome.



The Church has always accused her enemies of perfidy.

This implies that she would accept loyal attacks; but she would recognize as loyal only those that she was sure she could readily overcome. She calls perfidious the blows that aim at the chink in the armor — that is, the penetrating blows. The other blows hardly matter; many of Voltaire's epigrams, however amusing they were, still make us laugh perhaps, but do not seem to us far-reaching. Even further: I believe that whoever has never understood, loved, adored Christ and the divine teaching of his Gospel is ill qualified to combat what human discretion has made of it. And yet I can admire that discretion the Church manifested, but generally recognize in it nothing, or very little, of the spirit of Christ. It is a great shame that often that divine teaching and that totally human discretion should have been mingled, confused, to such a point that they cannot be separated without apparent outrage.



How extraordinary of them to reproach me with interpreting and adapting to myself the words of the Gospel! They are the ones, on the contrary, who interpret and explain. I take those words just as they are given me in that little book which confounds the wisdom of men. And I do not boast, to be sure, of having always practiced the precepts I read in it. But I am well aware that some of those precepts have dominated my thought to such a point that no philosophy has had any power against them. I have drawn from it a secret lesson that has

enriched, guided, and determined me; I have especially drawn from it my resistance to their teachings.



The Moslem considers Islamism as the only truly and purely monotheistic religion; and not Catholicism with its saints, its Virgin Mother, its Trinity. Our theologians, who strive toward the mystical unification of all this, do not convince him; he is obstinate. But our theologians are obstinate too when they refuse to understand that it is from just this tacit concession to polytheism that has risen the whole florescence of art — refused to the absolute monotheism of the Arabs (and of the Jews and Protestants).

Whether or not it is willing to admit it, it is only in so far as Catholicism becomes pagan (if I may say so), as it consents and yields to human diversity, that it favors art — and civilization. Goethe doubtless understood this; but not one of our *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, vying with one another in monotheism; not one of them, so far as I know, ever understood anything about paganism.



Of the very great (and constant) danger of making (of imagining) the adversary stupider (and in general weaker) than he is; or merely stupider than oneself. The Church very well foresaw, if not very well understood, the dangerous enemy that science was to be (and to become more and more), and particularly the doctrines, however groping they may still be, of transformism and evolution. They are directed not only to the future, but likewise to the past. What has already changed may still change, and vice versa: if man is likely to change in the future, one may be sure that he has not always been what he now is. The idea of a profound modification of man and of society (the one not being possible without the other) of necessity stirs up against it religion, which, quite rightly, is aware that man thereby eludes it, despite the virtuous effort of certain present-day believers to merge the idea of evolution and, even better, of revolution in religion itself. They could not succeed in doing so without letting go, either in the direction of dogma and mysticism or in the direction of practice. And if whoever holds that the social world must be changed and plans to help it and devotes himself to this sees in religion the most serious obstacle to progress, this is not, alas, without reason! My heart prompts that *alas*, for it is ever ready to oppose what the reason alone proposes. But the reason must, in this case as everywhere else, win out; not necessarily, but through the will of man — of a few men.



I cannot endure being told that I have discouraged anyone whatever. But those whose goodwill weakens when it ceases to find support in lies and illusions — it is not for them that I write.

There is a certain way of adoring God that strikes me as blasphemy. There is a certain way of negating God that approaches adoration.

II

(Summer 1937)

In the little unfinished book of Lenin, *The State and the Revolution*, which is so important and of such weight, there is a sentence that holds my attention. "Until now," he says, repeating an idea dear to Marx and Engels moreover, "there has not been a revolution that, in the long run, has not led to a strengthening of the administrative mechanism." I am quoting from memory and would not swear that these are exactly his words; but I believe I am not betraying his thought. In any case it is the very idea that his whole book develops. And in this consideration he finds encouragement to undermine more thoroughly the complex apparatus of the state. For if preceding revolutions led simply to a strengthening of the very thing they were trying to destroy, this is because those revolutions were incomplete, he thinks; they did not go far enough. That writing dates from 1917. If it is unfinished, this is because Lenin considers it more important to act than to write. He performed the complete revolution. In order to achieve it, and completely, all sacrifices were admitted. At last the revolution wins out, has won out. This was twenty years ago. And now what is the status of the U.S.S.R.? Dreadful bureaucracy, administrative mechanism has never been stronger. Never mind the "until now": that little sentence remains true and Lenin could still repeat what he wrote in 1917.



In Marx's writings I stifle. There is something lacking, some ozone or other that is essential to keep my mind breathing. Yet I have read four volumes of *Das Kapital*, patiently, assiduously, studiously; plus, from end to end, the volume of extracts very well chosen by Paul Nizan.²² Of Engels, the *Anti-Dühring*.²³ Plus a number of writings inspired by and on the subject of Marxism. I have read all this with

²² In 1934 had appeared a volume of selections from Marx entitled *Morceaux choisis*, with an introduction by Henri Lefebvre and Natan Guterman; the extracts representing Marx as a philosopher had been chosen by Paul Nizan and those representing him as an economist by J. Duret.

²³ *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft (Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring))*, by Friedrich Engels.

more constancy and care than I brought to any other study; and more effort too; with no other desire than to let myself be convinced, to yield even, and to learn. And each time I came away aching all over, my intelligence bruised as by instruments of torture. I went about repeating to myself: you must, knowing full well that I was not looking for pleasures, that having nothing to do with Marxism. But today I think that what especially bothers me here is the very theory, with everything, if not exactly irrational, at least artificial (I was about to say artful), fallacious, and inhuman it contains.

I think that a great part of Marx's prestige comes from the fact that he is difficult of access, so that Marxism involves an initiation and is generally known only through mediators. It is the Mass in Latin. When one does not understand, one bows down. Throughout all of Marx's writings (with perhaps the sole exception of the *Communist Manifesto* — and even there . . .), his thought remains scattered, diffuse, in a nebulous state; never does it coalesce or achieve density. Aside from the two famous slogans: "Proletarians, unite," and "It is not a question of understanding the world, but of changing it" (wonderful formula), one cannot manage, from page to page and chapter to chapter, to find a sentence that stands out and isolates itself from a confused magma. And the happy reception of Marxism comes likewise from the fact that not letting itself be gripped by any such projection, its enormous mass escapes seizure, and attack, too nebulous to crumble and weather. Blows simply sink in and never seem to carry.



I care very little whether or not my writings conform to Marxism. That "fear of the Index" that I used to express in the past, the absurd fear of being found in error by the pure Communists, bothered me greatly and at length, to such a degree that I no longer dared write. What I am saying will seem very childish. But I don't care. I am not interested in showing myself off to advantage, and I believe that I am most inclined to set forth my weaknesses. But now I am free of that sterilizing fear. And that fear has taught me a great deal; yes, much more than Marxism itself. The discipline I imposed on myself for three years has not been without advantage; but today I find greater advantage in liberating myself from it than in continuing to adhere to it. That plunge into Marxism allowed me to see the essential thing it lacked.

Did it require the failure of the U.S.S.R. to lead me to think thus? It is but the illustration of my blighted hope. And one first tries to tell oneself: it failed through infidelity. Then one again hears ring out the sinister words: "There has not been a revolution that has not. . . ."



Oh, how right you were to see in my coming to Communism a matter of sentiment! But how wrong you were not to understand that I was right! According to you, the only communism that matters is the one that is reached through theory. You speak as theoreticians. To be sure, theory is useful. But without warmth of heart and without love it bruises the very ones it claims to save. Let us beware of those who want to apply Communism coldly, of those who want, at whatever cost, to plow straight furrows on a curving field, of those who prefer to each man the idea they have formed of humanity.



All the same, the U.S.S.R. really did something. Despite the present ebb-tide, something will remain of it. And if one can think that the revolutionary movement in Russia brought about by reaction the fascist resistance of other countries, it is not paradoxical to say that it was Bolshevism and the great fear people had of it that determined the fascist governments to make protective social reforms, to which they would never have consented otherwise; a way of disarming the adversary. Even the Church saw that it was in her interest to pay more attention to social questions and that neglecting her duties had singularly added to the legitimacy of her enemies' claims. It was essential to take away Bolshevism's justification; putting it out of countenance was the best way of opposing it.



Marxist materialism is opposed to Christianity essentially (it is true that . . .). But I believe, I know, that that opposition in no wise exists in practice and that many young Marxists are very close to getting along, or quite ready to get along, with the socially conscious young Christians of today. It is precisely those who did not come to Marxism through reasoning, through theory, but through a painful need of justice and through that warmth of heart which is often indistinguishable from what the Christian calls charity; through love. Christian charity, which is always accompanied by a feeling of abnegation, rather than being opposed to the idea of justice, penetrates and fecundates it. Though temporarily relieving poverty, charity does not attack its roots and could even be said to maintain it thereby. The exercise of charity becomes, for certain Christians, a sort of necessary training; they perfect themselves through it, take pleasure in it, to the point where, without any poor to succor, they would feel quite impoverished. It is against this that the Jewish and Marxist idea of justice protests rightfully. But the latter misleads us by exalting the illusion that a better social state can ever overcome poverty. And that idea even favors, in those it misleads, a certain poverty of heart, a drying

up. So that I wonder which would be the more harmful to itself and to others, to humanity: a charity resigned to injustice or a justice having dispensed with love, a loveless impartiality?

I feel a brother solely to those who have come to Communism through love, through a great exigence of love.



In certain master pages of *L'Espoir*,²⁴ Malraux returns to what seems to remain his constant anxiety. He makes his Guernico say:

"God alone knows what trials he will impose on the priesthood; but I believe it essential that the priesthood should become *difficult* again."

And he adds at once:

"Like, perhaps, the life of every Christian."

And likewise his Alvear will say:

"Man involves in any action but a limited part of himself; and the more complete the action claims to be, the smaller is the part involved. You know that it is *difficult* to be a man, Mr. Scali; more difficult than the politicians believe."

And a bit further:

"The only hope," Alvear continued, ". . . that the new Spain has of keeping what you are fighting for, you, Jaime [his son] and many others [Republicans], is that there should be preserved what I have taught as best I could for many years. . . ."

"That is to say?" asked Scali.

"The old man turned round and said, in the tone in which he would have said alas!:

"The quality of being a man."



"I am not a Marxist," Marx himself exclaimed toward the end of his life, it is claimed. I like that sally. It means, in my opinion: "I am bringing you a new method and not a recipe nor a closed system that henceforth dispenses man from all effort (I mean from all intellectual effort). Do not limit yourself consequently to my words, but go beyond them."

It has been too often said that Molière was making fun of medicine. Not at all: he laughs at doctors and what they had made of medicine. It is not for Aristotle that he has a grudge, but for Aristotelianism. Not for science, but for the learned men of his time proceeding by mumbo-jumbo, for whom the knowledge of formulæ lazily took the place of direct observation of nature.

²⁴ The novel, *Man's Hope*.

How many young Marxists of today, entangled in "dialectics," swear by Marx as people used to swear by Aristotle. Their "culture" begins and ends with Marxism, and this allows them, they think, to understand everything, to judge everything; and everything that escapes Marxism or contradicts it they declare insignificant or bad.



It is noteworthy that certain pure theoreticians of Marxism expect, hope, demand of society, of the social state, what they in no wise begin by achieving in themselves. For the Christian, the revolution takes place within himself. I should like to be able to say: within himself first; but most often that revolution is enough for him; while the outer revolution is enough for the others. These two efforts, these two results, I should like to be complementary and believe that, often, they are rather artificially opposed.

A constant need of reconciliation torments me; it is a failing of my mind; it is perhaps a good quality of my heart. I should like to marry Heaven and Hell, *à la* Blake;²⁵ reduce oppositions and most often refuse to see anything but misunderstandings in the most ruinous and fatal antagonisms. "Individualism and Communism . . . how can you claim to reconcile those adversaries, even in yourself?" my friend Martin du Gard said to me laughingly. "They are water and fire." From their marriage is born steam.

What a sorry need of hatred I feel everywhere today! A need of opposing all things that ought to understand one another, complete one another, fecundate one another, join together! . . .



Between materialism and spiritualism the opposition would be less bitter if, instead of "materialism," it was admitted that "rationalism" is meant. Thenceforth an understanding is not impossible. As for me, I feel profoundly that of these two states of mind, one has everything that the other just happens to lack. I cannot accept an irrational spirituality nor endure a materialism exclusive of all spirituality. But people become stubborn; and the materialist does not recognize that he can negate the spirit only with the spirit itself; and the spiritualist does not admit that he needs matter itself in order to think.



I had felt these conflicts at work within me before meeting them on the outside. I knew them and it is through personal experience that I knew how much one wears oneself down, and how uselessly, in

²⁵ André Gide translated Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in 1922.

the struggle; a struggle that I had long encouraged between the very opposed elements of my nature until the day when I said to myself: what is the good of it? when I sought, not struggle and partial triumph, but agreement; in order to see at last that the more widely separated are the elements of the agreement, the richer is the harmony. And likewise, in a state, that dream of the crushing of one party by another is a gloomy utopia, that dream of a totalitarian state in which the subjugated minorities could no longer make themselves heard, in which (and this is worse) all and sundry would think the same. There can be no question of harmony when the choir sings in unison.

6 January

While reading *Athalie*¹ aloud to Em., why should my voice, when I reached the famous dialogue of the Queen with Eliacin, have been broken by sobs? This is because the supreme beauty of that scene appeared to me in all its fullness; more moving than the struggle of two passions in conflict, this assault of power and guile upon the purity of childhood, with the momentary rousing of Josabeth's anxiety as a witness of the scene. . . . I know nothing in dramatic poetry that is more tremblingly beautiful, more noble, and more perfect.

Montaigne tells us of "a good man, but such an Aristotelian that the most sweeping of his dogmas is that the touchstone and measure of all solid speculations and of all truth is conformity with the teaching of Aristotle; that outside of that there is nothing but chimeras and witlessness."²

This may be said for many Marxists of today — or Catholics.

That unconscious evaluation of the flight of time during sleep which used to allow me, when awakened in the middle of my sleep, to guess the time, not approximately, but with amazing exactness (I spoke of this with Pierre Louÿs, who wrote some reflections on this subject in his journal) — this too dulls with age and I can no longer trust myself at all to that inner time-keeping.

Preparing an anthology of Montaigne, I am rereading wonderful passages in the *Essais* analogous to those in my *Journals* published in the latest issue of the *N.R.F.*, which made some express amazement and regret that at sixty-seven I should already be speaking of getting old.³ These passages in the *Essais* were written when Montaigne was thirty-nine.

At sea, 18 January

Last day of the crossing. Last night, celebration on board, as usual. For the first time I wear my first dinner-jacket, at the captain's table.

¹ Racine's tragedy.

² In the essay "*De l'institution des enfans*" ("On the Education of Children"). Translation by Donald M. Frame (Crofts Classics).

³ Gide's *Pages de Journal* (*Extracts from the Journals*) published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* for December 1937 covered the period 6 June — 30 October 1937. *The Living Thoughts of Montaigne presented by André Gide* was published in 1939 by Longmans, Green & Co. in New York.

Excellent dinner followed by innocent bombardments from table to table, then by a dance. Gaiety somewhat artificial at first, which becomes natural just as *my* nature invites me to withdraw. There are not many of our traveling-companions of either sex with whom I feel like talking; perhaps with none more than with the captain of the *Asie*, but the moment is not propitious. I leave the dance and go to smooth out my crumpled mind on the deck and in my cabin.

Rather heavy rolling during the night. Not possible to sleep. This morning it is almost cold. Contrary to expectation, the temperature has gone down from day to day since Madeira.

I slept an unbelievable number of hours during the first days; not exactly ill, but my senses and mind benumbed to the point of stupidity. Derived a little pleasure from life only with Montaigne, whom I am rereading rapidly with a view to an anthology that an American publisher has asked me for; but at times rapture stops me and I wonder if ever human writing has given me more amusement, satisfaction, and joy.

The monotony of the voyage is broken only by the call at Madeira, more successful than one dared hope (15 January). A trim little town, varnished, polished, waxed (in so far as we could see at night). The inlaid sidewalks seem like drawing-room parquets and one looks for a spot where one can decently drop a cigarette butt; clean . . . oh, so clean! . . . But the devil will not be the loser. Just time to notice this and already the skiff returning to the *Asie* takes us away again.

We find the first-class deck unrecognizable, hung with tablecloths, embroidered table-covers, ornaments that merchants have spread out for sale. At about one a.m. we weigh anchor, pursued for some time more by the shouts and calls of the venders. They have had to fold up their wares, but, in the small boats taking them home, they still hold forth white cloths at arm's length. The passengers exhibit their purchases to one another.

19 January

There are certain days when I feel as if outlined solely by my shadows.

Dakar

One breathes, the first morning, a sharp, pure, virgin air. A sweeping wind, as if suddenly sprung from the confines of a permanent state of creation, is cleaning the earth before the sun's coming.

Having got up too early, I try to savor without impatience the irreplaceable moment before departure.

Kaola ⁴

Pleasant house in which we are camping. Everything in it is as clean as can be, doubtless; for how can one keep being invaded by black beetles — or cockroaches.⁵ I always confuse them, like porpoises with dolphins.

Night of anguish. Went to bed early, very sleepy; but stiflings. Stomach churning; never again take that frightful soft and sticky meat which is called "fish" in this country.

At midnight I decide to have recourse to dial. Badly closed tubes, which open and scatter the lozenges in my valise. In the bathroom, where I go to get some distilled water (but a mistake was made: the bottle contains syrup), I surprise cockroaches in the act of copulating. I thought they were wingless; but some (probably the males), without taking flight, unfold enormous trembling wings. When I am ready to go back to bed, I notice rising above the top of the wardrobe opposite my bed the erect head of a python, which soon becomes but an iron rod.

Got up at dawn. The main road, which passes our veranda, becomes active: a whole nation is going to market. Very "road to India."

One wastes one's time inspecting all the schools. Out of conscientiousness; in order to be able to say: I did this. Accompanied by the administrator, the educational head (very good), and an inspector of teaching (who seems to us remarkable). I should especially have liked to talk to him; he steps out of our main group in order to converse with Pierre Herbart, whose books he has read and for whom he shows a real liking. — But what could be more useless than this rapid visit, this greeting from the pupils, this handshake with the teachers? If this is what is called an "inspection," I disclaim competence.

With the administrator Rémy, in an auto, we cross the river; we reach the village of Thiovandou, where a tom-tom greets us. Old village chief, already glimpsed in the morning at the headquarters of the Provident Society (one more summary and useless "inspection"), in full costume; fine white-bearded head of an old man. Extraordinary acrobatics of some of the blacks of the tom-tom; grace and beauty of a contortionist who lifts a foot up to his forehead, then putting his big toe in his mouth, remains like this on the sand, arm outstretched

⁴ Altogether concerned with the report that I was to furnish the Committee of Inquiry which had sent me to French West Africa, I took, during this trip, but very few personal notes. The rest has no literary interest and does not belong here. [A.]

⁵ The French has three words here: *blattes*, *cancrelats*, and *cafards*, all of which mean "black beetles" or "cockroaches."

and torso bent. . . . This might be hideous, but it is strangely graceful, wonderful.

After dinner we are led in the night by the sounds of another tomtom, much less odd but surrounded by a large crowd. A wag button-holes Pierre at length, trying to get from him "zero fifty" to buy a candle, lamenting of having left "wife and children in the dark"; he is drunk. We leave the circle after having tarried some time; interminable wandering in the night.

27 January

The sky is limpid; the air is fresh, salubrious. Everything is clear, sparkling, and joyous. As we were getting ready to leave, a native of about thirty years old came to us, insisting on speaking at once. He wanted very much to tell us of an affair that seemed to us important enough to deserve our immediate attention, and we give up our original plan of going this morning to Guinguineo, where I do not believe that anything very interesting was awaiting us. The native speaks with a voice full of emotion; he tells decently, moderately, but emotionally of certain maltreatments recently endured by the people of his village; he has just covered 80 kilometers in a small truck especially to inform us. Soon tears run down his face. I remember Semba N'Goto — who, immediately after my departure, had to undergo a long imprisonment for having spoken to me.

Giving up any other plan, we are going to accompany the administrator Rémy, whom we have alerted and who is going to start an inquiry at once. Already, the day before, long interrogation at the police station. Policeman X. swears "on everything he holds most sacred," and with a somewhat furious quaver in his voice, that he has not raised his hand against any native. Of course! All the brutalities (as we learn later) were administered by a native guard (?) who accompanied him and who, under his orders, put the offenders in irons (including the venerable village chief) and rained blows upon them to get confessions from them.

What confessions? — Those of having dealt with the Syrians for the sale of peanuts. (Study this question separately, which is linked to that of the Provident Societies — excellent in principle, but leading to certain frauds that the police happen to be charged with tracking down.)

Irons: a heavy metal rod, four or five yards long, on which slide metal U's just wide enough to hold the prisoners' ankles. It is an old instrument which, in principle, should not be used any more, but which takes the place of a jail if need be, for the village has no place to lock up the accused until they can be transported to Kaolak.

The affair will be put in order, and promptly, I make sure. But one

has to admit that the functioning of the Provident Societies still allows certain regrettable slips. In general, the administrator is overworked; hence, to facilitate his work, the excessive reduction in the number of "trading points." Worth reporting.

Broad yellow flowers close to the ground, similar (in aspect, color, and dimension) to the St. John's wort of our gardens.

On the road to Kayes a number of partridge, a few rare guinea-hens. At times huge monkeys of a dung-brown color.

Bafoulabé

The astounding thing is not that Pabo Sissoko should be a fetishist (like every member of the three tribes of Bafoulabé) — the astounding thing is that he has not ceased to be, and a convinced fetishist, despite reading Descartes, Spinoza, Plato, etc. He talks of Frazer, Lévy-Bruhl, and refutes them. He speaks with authority and vehemence and considers that I was quite wrong to add notes in the account of my *Voyage au Congo*. My original observations were exact, he says: the rectifications according to Lévy-Bruhl are not. He negates the "prelogical" state, a pure invention of theoreticians, he says.

His great master is Fustel de Coulanges; it is toward *La Cité antique* that he turns; there it is that he finds his chief support.⁶

He knows that he himself (like all those in his family) is *also* a panther. But no connection with the criminal human panthers.

Kita, 1 and 2 February

Convince oneself once and for all that the moral value of people does not depend on their political color.

He who makes great demands upon himself is naturally inclined to make great demands on others.

X. replies alternately: "Useless to build roads; there are no products," and: "Useless to produce; there are no roads to transport the products."

3 February

Morality today is so relaxed that it seems as if one must compliment people when they simply do their duty. I have known a child who considered it very unjust that his teacher noticed only the mistakes in a dictation: "He didn't say anything about all the words I wrote correctly."

I hasten to add that the work of certain administrators seemed to

⁶ *The Ancient City* by Fustel de Coulanges was first published in 1864; it shows the strength of religious institutions in ancient societies.

me, more than once, admirable; certainly I did not bring out enough, and I regret it, in the account of my *Voyage au Congo*, all the endurance, patience, courage, initiative, and virtue often involved in the colonist's energy. There were heroes among them; one would wish them to be less rare. They are most often, alas, playthings in the hands of pirates who cover their shameful dealings with the virtue of such.

Bamako, 6 February

Early awake and on the branch, O delightful bird who fold your wings and come to rest only in order to sing!

You do not get up early enough. You will not have known those pre-dawn departures, nor all the martial virtue the morning wind pours into the heart.

Siguiri, 9 February

Between Bamako and Siguiri, no wild-life at all. Landscape made up of anthills. We take the wrong road. Having left Bamako at six a.m., we do not reach Siguiri until one p.m.

Fifty kilometers before arriving, a "placer" on the road. Feverish activity of a whole mass of people scraping the earth. (They are between five and six hundred.) In spots, wells eight to ten yards deep. The fever broke out only in the last four or five days. People come rushing. We think at first: not yet informed, the big monopolists have not had time to come; but no, the gold content is too slight and the placer is abandoned to the natives. There are a few chiefs directing the work and overseeing it; but also many independent prospectors: the profit is theirs. They manage to make ten to fifteen francs a day. Consume only 1 franc 25. Whence abnormal prosperity of the neighboring villages. Great display of merchandise.

Kankan, 10 February

While I am in the auto, it seems to me that I have many things to note down. As soon as we stop, nothing.

From Siguiri to Bamako a monotonous region, very little inhabited. No wild life. We are told that the natives hunt it down, but there are no natives.

11 February

Left Kankan at 5.40 a.m., our special train scheduled twenty minutes ahead of the regular train.

Reached Mamou at 5.30 p.m. I am paid military honors. The people of the administration in dress uniform, with all medals flying; in my

colored shirt and khaki trousers, lamentably untidy, I remind myself of *The Government Inspector*.⁷ Strive to make up for the undress of my costume by an excessive dignity in bearing.

On the road from Mamou to Dalaba, at night, we pass in the opposite direction a rather large animal that the chauffeur asserts to be a panther; for a moment it stops, dazzled by our headlights. Many rather big birds, with easy sweeping flight, rise up before the car, one after another; goatsuckers, I believe.

Likewise encounter with a serpent, about a yard long, on the side of the road. We are walking while the chauffeur is repairing a blow-out. The serpent remains motionless; from a distance we throw stones at it. Close to, it is merely a strip of cloth.

Admirable vegetation, quite close to the Villa Djanine, forming a gallery along a stream-bed, dried up in this season of the year. Huge blocks of reddish rocks. Shade. Oddness. One can imagine what this country must be like after the rains. Fourteen varieties of butterflies around the last puddles. Exceptionally, and for the first time in this country, I hear a *real song* of a bird. The numerous birds one encounters here have only whistlings, cooings, cries, chatterings, but always very brief and stereotyped, analogous to those of the dove and the cuckoo. I think of the blackbirds, the thrushes, the redbreasts of Normandy! It is enough to make one wonder if man's evolution, if his culture, have not led the fauna to follow him, and if the art of song has not developed among the birds of our countries through a sort of contagion (I was about to say: through psittacism). This does not seem to me impossible.

Doubtless many of these natives speak their own language very badly. I mean: take but a very limited advantage of its possibilities, both in regard to vocabulary and in regard to the very supple syntactic forms; use, for wholly practical purposes, but a very small number of words and leave almost unconjugated the verbs (though very flexible, we are told) which they employ.

In this walk on which Pierre accompanies me, the children guiding us lead us to an old circular construction of branches in the interstices of which heavy stones have been set. It is too small for a cabin. A storehouse perhaps? No, it is a panther-trap. Inside, a goat's haunch, already rotting, gives off an attractive stench. A trigger is sprung if the animal touches the prey offered him, and behind him will fall at

⁷ Gogol's famous play.

once a sort of wooden blade to close the ground-level opening that gives access to the trap.

All the women in the region are excised. "This," we are told, "is to calm their lust and ensure their conjugal fidelity."

Immediately afterward we are told: "You understand: since these women feel nothing, they give themselves to anyone whatever; nothing stops them. . . . Oh, of course, they never give themselves for nothing!"

Obviously the two statements seem contradictory. One is forced to admit that if the aim were conjugal fidelity . . . But no (it seems); rather this: keep the wife from making love for pleasure. For money, it's all right! And the husband congratulates himself on having a (or more than one) wife who produces income.

This is one of the rare points on which all the Frenchmen, when questioned, agree. One among them, who has a great experience of the "moussos" of Guinea, asserts that he has never met a native woman who sought pleasure in the sexual act; he even went so far as to say: not one who knew voluptuous pleasure.

Climb gradually, like chimney-sweeps in a chimney, propping oneself first on the right and then on the left. For it is good to say: first food, then medical care; education will come afterward. But it is certain that without education the people will transgress against hygiene and will neither extend nor perfect their cultivation.

It may be that X. is good. But he has complete power over his men; they are at his mercy. In prosperous times I am willing to believe X. to be less harsh than the native exploiter. But in times of scarceness he may become bitter, take revenge on others for his disappointments.

The natives are now protected only by this: that the planter needs his human livestock and finds it advantageous to feed them enough for that livestock to produce properly. Consequently he takes care of it. But when he comes to argue that his employees, if they are not happy with him, are always free to leave him, he is joking; just as the village chief does when he uses the same argument. Both of them know that it is not easy for those agricultural piece-workers to break their bonds. Where would they go? What means of subsistence until they find another employer? They are held in check by fear of worse. They are no more free to escape than the Russian workman is to leave his factory or the worker in a kolkhoz to seek ill fortune elsewhere. They are hooked.

The new social laws, if they were to be scrupulously applied, are such as to exasperate the planter. They get in his way, hamstringing him; it may even be that they ruin him. If that's the way it is, he will think,

I have nothing better to do than to get out. And one can throw back at him what he said to the native: he too is free; he is not being held.

"What! So many years of efforts, of patience, of ingenuity, of endurance! So much capital invested! . . ."

The fact is that many enterprises, here, can prosper only with a system rather close to slavery.

Delaba, 18 February

I find here, probably left by mistake, a rather recent issue of *La Revue de Paris*, in which I read the wonderful pages of Valéry that are to be appended to Noulet's book.⁸ Valéry has never written anything perhaps that delights me more. (I often have this impression with him.)

* * *

Paris, 12 March

That contemptible comedy that we all play more or less and to which I should like to lend myself less than so many others, so that my writings find in this very refusal their chief value.

The anxiety we have for the figure we cut, for our personage, is constantly cropping out. We are showing off and are often more concerned with making a display than with living. Whoever feels observed observes himself. Yet there are some tormented by the constant anxiety of presenting a more authentic image of themselves, in closer conformity with their inner reality. There are others who make a great effort and would like to be taken at their face value, but their face value does not represent what they really are. Hypocrites? . . . Not altogether.

I had accompanied Elisabeth to the Gare de Lyon. Her train left at eight o'clock. The morning was radiant; I could not make up my mind to go back home. I went near by to pick up Robert Levesque, whom I had not seen since my return from French West Africa; invited him to go with me to the Jardin des Plantes, where I wanted to see my chameleon again. Not managing to feed him, I had turned him over to the Vivarium, where he is stuffed with cockroaches for lack of flies, rather rare in this reason. "Timothy," the only one of his species, cuts a very elegant figure beside two enormous chameleons from Madagascar, the color of cinders. He immediately decked himself in grass-green, spotted with black; this is his dress costume.

⁸ Valéry's fascinating *Fragments des mémoires d'un poème* ("Fragments of the Memoirs of a Poem") eventually appeared as an appendix to *Paul Valéry* by E. Noulet in 1938. This essay is a brief spiritual autobiography explaining how he abandoned, and then returned to, poetry.

I feel again that extraordinary serenity which Butler said he experienced in the contemplation of big pachyderms; which I enjoy indistinctly in this place where all human activity is devoted to the study of animals and plants. Probably the way of communing with God that most satisfies me is that of the naturalists. (I do not know that of the astronomers.) It seems to me that the divinity they approach is the least subject to caution.

Chatted almost an hour with Auguste Chevalier, with great profit and pleasure.

As soon as I return to that atmosphere of the natural sciences, I tell myself again: I missed my vocation; it is a naturalist that I should have liked to be, should have been.

Robert Levesque gives me four issues of *Le Journal*, which he had saved so that I might read a series of articles by Montherlant on children; very judicious, wide-awake, and skillfully turned-out articles. He says nothing in them that I have not already said or thought, but I enjoy seeing it presented with so much verve and "bite."

Article by Claudel on Wagner — which smells painfully of 1914. Are we going to begin again to see the wind of panic, of hatred, bend our thoughts?

In the whole of Browning's work, which I pick up again in the light of Cazamian's precious book,⁹ bursts forth an extraordinary love of life. When I examine myself thoroughly, I see that it is to this, after all, that my optimism comes. It does not differ from his and, on the whole, has but little connection with outside events, from which the soul of his heroes is constantly escaping. That soul maintains itself, despite set-backs, in a loftier atmosphere in which vexations, whether stemming from elementary forces or from men, do not touch it. Browning's "state of soul" is comparable, in this regard, to the complete Christian's. Browning knows this and feels this without being a believer himself; and that region, above the blows of fate, is the very region of divinity.

In *Instans Tyrannus* he makes a despot speak, annoyed to see a poor creature elude him by his very insignificance, sheltered in his destitution. The tyrant becomes irritated, wants to deal severely with him; but the other takes refuge in a heaven that opens up before him to welcome him — so that it is the tyrant who is afraid.

No one more than Browning has held out to us the multiple possi-

⁹ In early 1938 the Aubier "Bilingual Collection of Foreign Classics" brought out Browning's *Men and Women* with English and French on facing pages and elaborate explanatory notes by Louis Cazamian.

bilities of human nobility and, in other words, of joy. His prismatic inner universe leaves each of his creatures his share of the multicolored rays that, brought together in focus, will form God. He grants each one the most chances, the most *raison d'être* and justification, and it is through and according to the "point of view" of each that his God is diversified. He is never short of arguments; but they are valuable only for the single character who uses them and, when all is said and done, have none but a psychological significance. And one feels that he is in awe before such diversity. One might call him a naturalist poet who takes each soul, one after another, and tries to see what the image of God becomes through it and for it. The whole work of Browning: God seen through souls. Each one, according to its token, refracts but a few colors of the ray.

It is easy for a pederast to appear chaste in the eyes of a heterosexual. On the other hand, the truly chaste man is readily suspected by the homosexual of being himself merely a homosexual trying not to be and resisting himself, or ignorant of himself. Such suspicions, it must be added, are rather often founded.

Chastity more rarely follows fear, or a resolution, or a vow, than it is the mere effect of lack of appetite and, sometimes even, of distaste.

Cuverville, 5 April

Each time I pick up Bossuet again, I do so with a constant rapture that makes me think, at the moment, that there is not one of our writers, were he Pascal even, whom I prefer, not one who managed to bring our language to a greater fullness, to a more harmonious perfection, to a more supple strength.

What sureness in the choice of words! What boldness!

But my admiration for Bossuet, I must add at once, like the admiration I bear Hugo, is limited to the form. I am well aware that what gives the form its fullness and the splendor of its outlines is the passion that fills it, for that form is never empty; but, as in Hugo, with what complacent commonplaces I find it often filled! The quotations from the Bible or the Church Fathers, however admirable they may be, often make the impression of stuffing; it all holds together and is as thick as thieves to bind our reason so that we cannot escape.

In the extraordinary *Panegyrique de Saint Joseph* (the first one)¹⁰ in which history by its silence gives him clear sailing, what will he not invent? In order to fill out his bold apology, he does not fear to give faith to the most unbelievable story of husband and wife who, never

¹⁰ Bossuet wrote two *Panegyrics of St. Joseph*, the first in 1656 and the second, at the request of Anne of Austria, in 1659.

having consummated their marriage in the flesh, and having been buried separately and apart, were, after death, joined together in the same tomb "without anyone's having lent a hand." Which signifies, according to a very beautiful sentence of Bossuet, that "they are not the most beautiful loves in which lust is involved," etc. So that it would amount to insulting chastity not to accept a miracle that proves its wonderful efficacy.¹¹ "It is easy to understand," he says elsewhere (*Sermon pour la Compassion de la Sainte Vierge*), "that nature can do nothing on this occasion." Oh, of course not!

I occasionally have great trouble, when reading Bossuet, in keeping back a smile of irreverence.

6 April

Schubert's exquisite *Barcarolle*, in which the voice melts and flows and mingles with the accompanying murmur of the water, a melody that one imagines sung in an undertone and almost in a whisper (in the way in which the marvelous Viennese singer, whose name escapes me, sang the *Serenade* in the film on the *Unfinished Symphony*), I heard that barcarolle declaimed yesterday (and I was about to say: bawled out) by an unknown torchsinger (unknown to me) who finds in it a pretext to show off her fine organ; and this under an absurd title: *Message d'amour*.¹² It remained rather fine all the same, though banalized, disenchanted. The text is by Count von Stollberg; I should like to reread it and compare it with the French translation.¹³

10 April

That morning, I was in E major. Each of my thoughts comprised four sharps; plus all the accidents that come up in the course of the modulation. I transposed into E all the old refrains that drummed in my ears with obsessive obstination. All were not vulgar, besides, and sometimes a certain phrase from the Pastoral Symphony or from a Bach Largo would win out over *Les Gars de la Marine* or the old *Chanson de la Boiteuse* of the late Paulus.¹⁴ All I could achieve was to replace one with another, never to stop the current and impose silence. Once the tune had begun, it would continue flowing endlessly for hours, persisting through conversations, events, landscapes, and probably even through my sleep, as far as I could judge by the resumption, on awaking, of the obsession on which, with which, I had

¹¹ "I shall not seek reasonings to prove this truth; but I shall establish it by a great miracle that I read in St. Gregory of Tours." [A.]

¹² *Message of Love*.

¹³ I have done so: love doesn't enter into it at all. [A.]

¹⁴ Both *The Boys of the Navy* and the *Song of the Lame Girl* have long been popular songs.

gone to sleep the day before. At times, out of all patience, I would try to interrupt it by mentally reciting a group of verses; but then, beneath my recitation, it would go on in a subterranean infiltration and would burst forth later, just as the river-water, after the Rhône's disappearance, is seen to reappear farther on. Some of those obsessions involved a rather large number of measures and offered possibilities of modulation that permitted their repetition in another key. Then the obsession was not satisfied until it had gone completely around the scale and returned to the initial key. In the course of that circuit, I felt a certain relief upon leaving the region of sharps to enter that of the flats, and vice versa, for you can well imagine that I had no preference; whatever the key, I felt imprisoned and despite myself unwound the melody as the squirrel makes his cage turn.

I dream of silent paradises.

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Paris, 21 August

Finding myself quite alone and with almost no work to do, I decide to begin this notebook, which, for several months, I have been carrying with me from one halting-place to another with the desire to write in it anything but this; but since Em. left me I have lost the taste for life and, consequently, ceased to keep a journal that could have reflected nothing but disorder, distress, and despair.

Last night my eyes fell, almost by chance, on a line of Baudelaire that it seemed to me I did not yet know. This line corresponded so curiously to my present state that it seemed to me Baudelaire had written it particularly for me and for this precise moment in my life. And yet this line owes a little of its extraordinary incantatory power to this: that it generalizes and urges us to consider as a banal law, applicable indifferently to all, what we were perhaps flattering ourselves we were alone in knowing.

*When our heart has once its harvest reaped,
 Living is painful. 'Tis a secret known to all.*¹⁵

¹⁵ This double ruled line, which appears without commentary in the French edition, marks the death of Mme André Gide during the summer of 1938.

¹⁶ The lines:

*Quand notre cœur a fait une fois sa vendange,
 Vivre est un mal. C'est un secret de tous connu*

are from "Semper Eadem" in *Les Fleurs du mal*.

Moreover, this is just what the words "secret known to all" say. Baudelaire is skillful in entrusting to a few words that at first *look like nothing at all* his most profoundly painful truths.

*I tip my urns one by one
For one more drop from each.*¹⁷

That is Victor Hugo, but the sound of the voice is the same; the two images meet to depict a like distress, which is mine and that of any person who feels the ground, on which his confident foot trod, now yielding.

Since she has ceased to exist, I have merely pretended to live, without taking any further interest in anything or in myself, without appetite, without taste, or curiosity, or desire, and in a disenchanted universe; with no further hope than to leave it.

All the work of my mind, these recent months, was a work of negation. And not only did I put my value in the past, but that past value seemed to me imaginary and not worth the least effort to recapture it. I was, I still am, like someone sinking into a stinking morass, looking all around him for anything whatever that is fixed and solid of which to catch hold, but dragging with him and pulling into that muddy inferno everything he clutches. What is the good of speaking of that? Unless, perhaps, so that someone else, desperate like me, will feel less alone in his distress when he reads me; I should like to hold out a helping hand to him.

Shall I get out of this quagmire? I have already gone through periods of opprobrium when the apostle's cry sprang to my heart: "Lord, save us: we perish!" And I even know how to utter this cry in Greek. For it did not seem to me that any salvation was possible without some supernatural intervention. And yet I got out of it. But I was younger. What does life still hold in store for me?

I cling to this notebook, as I have often done: as a system. A system that used to work. The effort attempted in this way seems to me comparable to that of Baron Munchausen tearing himself from the morass by pulling himself by the hair. (I must already have had recourse to this image.¹⁸) The wonderful thing is that he manages to do so.

22 August

I had set out to write more. There came to break my impetus an Austrian who, leaving tomorrow for Bolivia, wants to show me first a

¹⁷ The lines:

*Je penche tour à tour mes urnes pour avoir
De chacune une goutte encore*

are from the poem "*Paroles sur la dune*" ("Words on the Dune") in *Les Contemplations*.

¹⁸ No earlier use of the image can be found.

very important writing, he says, on the question of sex, in which he refutes the theses of my *Corydon*. "Since you are taken to task in it, it cannot fail to interest you; it is essential for you to read it." He has already come three times to ring in vain at my door, not resigning himself to leaving France without having spoken with me. I struggle for three quarters of an hour with him and eventually persuade him, but with great difficulty, that I read German too slowly and am too busy to give sufficient attention to his writing. Meanwhile Malacki arrived, whom I am very glad to see again and who, speaking German better than I, serves as interpreter. Since he too would like to leave France for . . . Bolivia if it is possible, he makes an appointment with the Austrian, and this allows the latter to leave a little less disappointed.

It is extremely painful for me to disappoint; but, in order not to disappoint, to what enormous outlays I am frequently led! Less costly, however, than certain acts that border on insincerity. What a relief when everything is limited to a material expense and I can get out of it by giving up a few banknotes! But if time, attention, affection, solicitude are involved . . . I cannot suffice. I should like to catch hold of myself and know and repeat to myself that, dispossessed of myself, I become no good. And the time that remains to me to live is counted.

That Austrian's disappointment is nothing; he can get over it. But what of the disappointment of that young German painter from whom I have been receiving passionate letters for two years, to which I reply with a calculated moderation?

Did he not speak, in each of his letters, of leaving Riga (where he has exiled himself, where he says he is vegetating miserably), of coming to Paris with the sole purpose of feeling near me, of seeing me! I dissuaded him from this with all my strength, with all the most serious arguments: what can he hope to find in Paris but unemployment, poverty, despair? Nothing managed to convince him. The little money he had been able to put aside in two years, which would have allowed him to live almost decently in Latvia, is already almost all spent.¹⁹ In Paris, where he arrived without warning me while I was still at Chitré, he took a room in that Hôtel de l'Élysée, rue de Beaune, where Valéry lodged for a long time. After several fruitless attempts, he descended upon me the morning before yesterday, convinced that his ardor would overcome all obstacles. . . .

11 a.m.

He has just descended on me again. I had nevertheless definitely told him that I could not find time to see him again. . . . The most

¹⁹ Happy to learn that he at least has his return ticket. [A.]

upsetting part of it is that, after having sent him away the day before yesterday, I continued to think of him, reproaching myself with not having managed to do more for him; for he knows no one in Paris. But decidedly I am not made to endure the pathetic; what it immediately brings out in me is irony. I have too much trouble taking myself seriously. Faced with excessive effusions I become like ice and should like to thumb my nose at whoever declares that he "adores me like a God." Kurt Erichson is twenty-six. He is a very handsome fellow who reminds me of the winners in the races or athletic meets whom I admired yesterday in the film on the Berlin Olympics. He asks me to live with him for a fortnight. I tried, in the gentlest possible way, to point out to him that he came too late, that I was now but an old man; that, furthermore, all my time was taken and that I hardly belonged to myself any more. All this in German. I repeated: *Es ist zu spät* (thinking it likewise in regard to him), *jetzt bin ich nur ein alter Mann*, and above all: *zu beschäftigt* . . . whereupon he began to sob, and this cooled me off once and for all. Yet I endured his continuing to weep, his head on my shoulder, praying for the doorbell or the telephone to put an end to his demonstrations.

This morning he had sent in ahead of him a message that Marie handed me while he waited in the vestibule. But I had him shown in at once and it is only now that I read his note. Oh, if only I had read it earlier!

Ich bitte dich: nur 10 minuten,²⁰ he said. . . . I wasted more than two hours with him.

I am mean to say "I wasted," for, going out with him, I led him to the N.R.F. in order to examine with Hirsch the means of getting his painting exhibited, which does not seem to me valueless; then I took him to lunch at Lesur's,²¹ where, for the first time since he has been in Paris, he told me, he ate meat (learned the sad death of Lesur); then accompanied him to Maurice Sachs's, for he seemed to me particularly qualified to give him some practical advice, but unfortunately we didn't find him in.

23 August

I have again been interrupted. It was Maurice Sallet who, as we had agreed by telephone, came to pick me up at seven o'clock. I had gone after him, around noon, at Adrienne Monnier's, for she has entrusted her shop to him and lent him her apartment.²² Sallet deserves

²⁰ "I beg you: only ten minutes."

²¹ A restaurant on the Quai Voltaire.

²² Mlle Monnier's excellent bookshop on the rue de l'Odéon is called La Maison des Amis du Livre. It was first opened in 1917 and has long been a center of cultural life.

that kindness. I found him beaming. He has an almost too handsome face and an extraordinary distinction of manner, which does not fit with his hoarse, almost grating voice, which makes one think of the worst "doubled" films. I remain chatting with him very pleasantly for almost an hour; then he accompanies me to the door of the *Mercure de France*, where I greatly enjoy seeing Léautaud again. I believe that after a short time I should manage to be quite natural with him. But I am still too anxious to agree with everything he says in order to put him more at ease and to get from him those vast bursts of very sonorous laughter, which, as he hinted, do not spring from a very gay heart. Launched into the subject of the presumptuousness of the young of today, he is inexhaustible and relates amusingly and with self-satisfaction some very spicy anecdotes.

We agree that "in our time" — that is, when we were young — we should never have had the "nerve" to disturb our elders in order to make them read our awkward literary attempts and to beg of them advice, which, moreover, we were not at all inclined to follow. Léautaud is sinking into a sort of most delightful *subjective absolute*. He is particularly intractable in matters of language, refusing to admit sins against grammar. A girl came, last year, to his office (he tells the story), eager to consult the old collections of the *Mercure*. They are arranged on shelves. And when she saw them: "I didn't realize," she exclaimed, "that they took so much space!" Whereupon Léautaud: "Mademoiselle, we are accustomed to receive here only people who speak French."²³ And he goes on with an enormous laugh and in his fine, sonorous voice.

"But can you imagine that hussy who doesn't *realize!* . . . For several months I accepted being a 'reader.' It was Duhamel who had begged me to be. But I couldn't put up with it very long. Reading mediocre manuscripts — I don't know of any more maddening task! Besides, it went rather fast. At the first mistake in French — well, for instance, when I encountered an *aimer de . . . j'aimais de regarder . . . elle aimait de se promener . . . in the wastebasket!*"²⁴

However great may be his admiration for Valéry (we are speaking in particular of his so remarkable and quite recent essay on the notion of *liberty*²⁵), encountering an *aimer de* makes him stop reading. I wonder if perhaps he has not, in my writings too, stumbled on that

²³ The verb *réaliser* strictly means "to make real," though it is coming more and more to have the sense of "to be aware."

²⁴ The verb *aimer* should strictly be followed by the infinitive directly, but the *de* is becoming more frequent in speech.

²⁵ "Fluctuations on Liberty" (1938) was included in the 1945 edition of *Regards sur le monde actuel* and hence in the American edition (*Reflections on the World Today*).

expression, which I do not find so detestable and of which one could find some examples even in our best writers.

25 August

At Cuverville since yesterday evening. I am rereading, hoping to take advantage of the impetus, some of the pages written these last few days; but they strike me as so woolly that I wonder if I am to continue. Jean Hytier's book on me,²⁶ which I discover at the Gallimard bookshop (for, out of discretion doubtless, he did not send it to me and I was ignorant of its existence), had somewhat instilled new life in me. I think that nothing better has been written on my work and I like the fact that, following the recommendation of a sentence from my *Journal* that he uses as an epigraph, he takes, to judge that work, an æsthetic point of view. Yes, that book comforted me . . . would have comforted me: for what remains to me today of what constituted my value?

26 August

I shall convince myself that an element of self-indulgence enters into my complaining: the need for a certain unity of tone in this notebook and a sort of feeling of what is artistically suitable, similar to what made me exaggerate (in the sense of setting forth *solely*) my piety in the *Green Notebook*,²⁷ or my joy (too intentional and, hence, artificial) in my *Nouvelles Nourritures*. It is not by depicting my despair that I shall get away from it; but rather a condition already somewhat above it, which I shall then immediately strive to attain *à la* Robert.²⁸ And I shall first convince myself that there is nothing in this that is not utterly fair and legitimate, as soon as I look upon this notebook as a means of practice and encouragement. I must also learn all over again how to write.

26th in the evening

What does not seem to me quite fair, on the other hand, is holding my grief responsible for my languid condition; it is my grief that led me to it; it is not especially that which keeps me in it. And I am probably not in very good faith when I convince myself of it. I find in it a too easy excuse for my cowardice, a cover for my laziness. I was expecting that grief, I foresaw it for a long time, and yet I imagined my old age, in spite of grief, only as smiling. If I cannot succeed in attain-

²⁶ *André Gide*, published in Algiers in 1938 and reissued in Paris in 1945.

²⁷ *Numquid et tu . . . ?* [E.]

²⁸ Robert is the husband in Gide's *School for Wives* and the two sequels, *Robert* and *Genevieve*.

ing serenity again, my philosophy is bankrupt. To be sure, I have lost that "witness of my life" who committed me not to live "negligently" as Pliny did for Montaigne, and I do not share Em.'s belief in an after-life which would lead me to feel her eyes upon me beyond death; but, just as I did not allow her love, during her life, to influence my thought in her direction, I must not, now that she is no longer, let weigh upon my thought, more than her love itself, the memory of that love. The last act of the comedy is no less good because I must play it alone. I must not sidestep it.

A sort of instinct (of which I have already spoken) made me find this morning the best nourishment, the one that it seemed to me at once I had been awaiting, in Dante's *Purgatorio*, which I picked up with an almost mystical excitement. The opening lines of the first canto filled my heart, or soul, with an indescribable felicity.

Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro

.
.

*agli occhi miei ricominciò diletto
tosto ch'io uscì fuor dell' aura morta,
che m'avea contristati gli occhi e il petto.*²⁹

Dante is one of those to whom I owe the most (much more than to Shakespeare, for instance) and whose voice most directly called me. I read him much in the best time of my youth, slowly, patiently, diligently; with almost as much love and care as the Gospel.

*Lo suo parlar sì dolcemente suona . . .*³⁰
that, if sometimes I let fall

*Ciò che lo mio intelletto non comprende,*³¹
at least the suave and incisive melody of his poetry (and even of his prose) penetrated me so deeply that for a long time afterward my soul remained impregnated with it. It is enough for me today to re-read a few tercets to recover my former rapture.

. . . After midnight! To bed.

²⁹ These lines (13-18 of *Purgatorio*, I) are rendered by Carlyle-Wicksteed as follows:

Sweet hue of orient sapphire . . .

.

*to mine eyes restored delight, soon as I issued forth from
the dead air which had afflicted eyes and heart.*

³⁰ Line 5 of the second canzone of Dante's *Convivio*, III (*The Banquet*): "His speech sounds so sweetly."

³¹ Line 11 of the same: "What my intellect fails to understand."

27 August

In short, I am better; I am even as well as I can reasonably hope to be at my age. To work really; I mean: to give myself up to a productive work, I now lack only solitude. Em., while living at my side, knew miraculously how to surround me with a harmonious silence in which my thoughts could unwind without breaking; I have never done anything worth while without a long perseverance in effort. I let myself give too much time to conversation, to tennis, to chess. The house is almost full and will be completely so in a few days. Perfect understanding of each with all. I withdraw for hours at a time, interrupted by nothing, calm, without a thought for the future (I am speaking of my own), studious; and when the evening comes I am astonished to have done so little.

29 August

Yesterday, tennis in the morning; ride to Étretat in the afternoon (swim); chess in the evening, then letter to the Baroness von Kap Herr. Work: zero; and wrote nothing in this notebook. It is true that it was Sunday; but I do not have to pay attention to that with the semi-idle life I lead. I try to make up by getting up earlier this morning.

Scarcely anything to note from yesterday. This, however: I felt a flush of ignoble joy when Lucien Maury, whom I encountered at Étretat, told me that he was born in 1872, at feeling younger than he despite my greater age. That surprised me, moreover, for generally I am able to keep my heart sheltered from (or above) base feelings; and if, in my confessions, I am rather ready to make admissions, this is partly because I am not aware of much in me that is unconfessable, except in the domain of the flesh.

Lucien Maury's conversation is very substantial, if not very colorful. I feel a certain embarrassment in his presence that comes from the fact that the consideration he shows me strikes me as unjustified. Whence the great effort I make to bring forth some nuggets from my depths; whence that rather solemn tone I assume in such cases, which used to displease Roger Martin du Gard so much, in order to give weight to remarks that I know to be empty. But it is also the fault of those who listen to me with too attentive a respect. That tires and embarrasses me. And all this explains why that meeting with Maury, from which I was expecting great joy (I hadn't seen him in ten years perhaps), altogether returned me to solitude and made me think again: decidedly I have ceased to enjoy *chatting*. But then, why ask him with such insistence to come and take tea at Cuverville? At bottom I suspect a little jealousy for the intimacy that has grown up between Roger Martin du Gard and Maury. Not that I am exactly jealous of

either one, but I am somewhat vexed that Roger M. du G. should succeed in conversing with Maury more intimately and easily than is possible for me. . . .

I do not think there is much advantage to be had from such soul-searching, in which one always manages to discover mean motives for any behavior whatever. One would even invent them for the satisfaction of seeming more perspicacious to oneself, and one has a great tendency, on the other hand, to overlook, for fear of overrating oneself, all the natural kindness and sociability or better: amiability; or even better: the desire to seem amiable, that enters in. But, when too eager to watch oneself live, one ceases to live. The scrutiny, in this case, creates what it seeks and you become what you convince yourself that you are.

30 August

Days too short. Life too comfortable. I am doing nothing worth while.

Schiffirin, who has come to spend a week here, and Drouin are helping me to go over the translation of *Antony and Cleopatra*, in regard to which I receive weekly very abundant and detailed criticisms from the very obliging and competent Dr. Geslin. Some passages give us great trouble; they are generally the least good in Shakespeare.

I am reading Milton's *Comus* with rapture.

5 September

A succession of splendid days; a pure, radiant sky; as soon as it rises, the sun spreads an opulent felicity over the fields even though the harvests have been gathered; it seems that everything that breathes ought to feel happy. And, faced with this display of beauty, my heart remains indifferent, almost hostile. Since she has no longer been here, invitations to happiness are an intrusion upon me. What serenity in the azure! What divine indifference to the infinite misery of man!

Free at last and with no tie left, like a kite with the string suddenly cut, I toppled over, diving soul-first toward the ground, where I crashed.

10 September

I read, in the latest issue of *Temps présent*, an article by Stanislas Fumet, very fine indeed, stirring, and reasonable . . . but in which a sentence stops me: the one in which he speaks of the crucifixion of the Lord as "the greatest crime in history." Divesting the crucifixion of Jésus of its mystic necessity, making of it a crime that might have been avoided . . . is all right; but this amounts to admitting that Christ did not come on earth *in order* to be crucified. For it is one or

the other. The criminals can only be looked upon in this case as indispensable instruments. It was necessary that "everything be accomplished." Otherwise, let us try to imagine a Christ well received by men, immediately converted to his word, a Christ *who could not succeed in getting himself crucified*, and, at once, his mission as a redeemer would fail. This links up with former reflections: is the cross inseparable from Christ's teaching? Does it cut short, or perfect, his mission? If it is toward the cross that the Savior is progressing from his very birth, we must cease to call a "crime" the act of those who permitted the redemption.

Braffy, 13 September

Listened to Hitler's Nuremberg speech on the radio. The call to arms permits a facile eloquence, and it is easier to lead men to combat and to stir up their passions than to temper them and urge them to the patient labors of peace. The flattery springs from this: that the affirmation of strength contains a permission of stupidity.

If I have written nothing further in this notebook for several days, it is partly because I have got back to work. Schifftrin came, and during the fortnight he spent with us, I went over with him the proofs of my *Journal*. With Marcel ³² I spent from two to four hours each day going over in detail my translation of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The considerable improvements we made in it have made me feel my first version to be very defective; but I believe it almost excellent now. At a distance of ten years it would perhaps appear to me full of imperfections; not of errors; that does not seem to me possible, for we not only examined at great length all the doubtful passages in the text but also read patiently and meditated over the numerous explanatory annotations of the commentators in the excellent edition by R. H. Case that gathers them together. Nothing was better designed than this work to renew my enjoyment in living. Marcel likewise, who obviously took very great pleasure in it. Our understanding was complete, as in the early years. The proof pages became covered with changes, and numerous passages had so much written between the lines as to become almost incomprehensible for the printer. Schifftrin would then transcribe them with tireless care and patience. The work was finished the eve of my departure for Braffy.

16 September

I had gone with Jean Schlumberger to Lisieux and was waiting for him in his little car, which was to take us back to Braffy and was parked on the square, where the shadow was already beginning to

³² Marcel Drouin.

spread. The sky was completely pure; the air was warm. . . . And suddenly I wondered what kept me from being happy, from feeling utterly happy at this precise moment of the present. Nothing but phantoms, I told myself, stand in the way; my happiness is prevented only by the shadows they cast. Am I unable to brush them aside? To forget for a time my grief, the Spanish massacres, the anguish weighing upon Europe . . . ? I was not able to do so. And I am well aware that never again shall I know that full, naïve, and original joy which . . . but to describe it one would have still to experience it.

17 September

Jean gives me to read the initial pages of his brother Conrad's book, *Réflexions sur la guerre*.⁵³ I note these few sentences: "The Germans were my enemies; I was fighting them; my entire effort was directed against them. Could I be astonished by their crimes? They were in the order of things and I should have almost regretted having other adversaries. But for my friends the measure was not the same. How could I endure their allowing themselves to be led into such things? A lie from the Wolff agency made me smile and say: one more! But an inaccuracy in the French communiqué touched me to the quick. That the zeppelins should go and massacre a few women and children in London struck me as an absurd brutality, sufficiently stigmatized by all I knew; but I shuddered to hear called 'smart reprisals' a bombardment of Karlsruhe in which about a hundred children had been killed."

It is this same feeling that made me write that entreaty to the governors of Barcelona to respect the rights of defense and the rules of justice for their political prisoners. . . . And this caused me to be called a renegade and a traitor, even by Bergamín, alas!

I resent whatever tarnishes the cause that one would like to be solely the cause of justice.

19 September

I read yesterday, straight through or almost, the latest issue of *Les Feuilles libres* — in which, to begin with, a cheering diatribe by Alain against feminism, then the conclusion of a very interesting lecture by F. Ferré; but especially some remarkable considerations by L. Emery which link up with reflections of mine in 1914 that, with a certain cowardice perhaps, but above all through lack of self-confidence, I kept to myself. They do not strike me as so mad today and, had I expressed them, I am aware that they would have met some approval. This is what I used to say to myself, in a very low voice, but irresistibly: What would happen if France did not resist Germany? —

⁵³ *Reflections on War* by Conrad Schlumberger.

which very soon became: What would have happened if France had not put up any resistance? And I wondered: Are the *triumphal* precepts of the Gospel applicable only to the individual? Does that doctrine of non-resistance lose its virtue as soon as a whole people, a whole nation is involved? And would not the cry *vicisti Galileus* have had to be Germany's if, instead of meeting force with force, France had opposed to Germany but a spiritual resistance in which she would have been invincible? Was not the best way of struggling against the enemy cannon to make their effort useless? Germany could have easily swallowed up France; she would not have been able to digest her. She would soon have been quite embarrassed by that victory, and the "strike, but listen" would have made her blows useless.³⁴

Illusion? . . . Perhaps. For all this supposes a complete agreement, acceptance of a general command, and that the German advance should not be marked by the withdrawal of any army. Alas, recourse to force, even for resistance, always implies an abdication of the mind. That abdication is today the greatest subject of sorrow. This is also why the example of the Church's immaterial resistance is today so comforting.

From the window of my room I look at the near-by curtain of big trees. It has just rained and now the sun, which is setting behind the woods, touching with its last rays the still dripping branches, hangs diamonds on the tips of the boughs. The sparkling of one of these gems was such that I remained for some moments without understanding. The twig supporting the jewel against the sky was so delicate that my dazzled eyes did not make it out itself and I wondered, in awe, what beautiful new star this could be, bright enough to brave the dying rays of the sun? The enchantment lasted but a few moments.

22 September

Yesterday evening I finished rereading the first two hundred proof pages of my *Journal* for the Pléiade edition.³⁵ Now I can turn altogether to the preface for Shakespeare: ³⁶ It bores me and I shall say nothing worth while in it; yes, nothing worth the trouble of saying. Chores! chores! but they are better than the idleness that I do not yet know how to turn to contemplation.

Finished also *Les Jeunes Filles en fleurs* (which I notice that I had never read completely) with an uncertain mixture of admiration and

³⁴ See *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol. II, pp. 113-14.

³⁵ That edition first appeared in the summer of 1939.

³⁶ Gide was to write the foreword for the edition of Shakespeare's *Complete Plays* (translated by various hands) to be published in the Pléiade collection.

irritation.³⁷ Though a few sentences (and, in spots, very numerous ones), are insufferably badly written, Proust always says precisely what he wants to say. And it is because he succeeds so well in doing so that he delights in it. So much subtlety is, at times, utterly useless; he merely yields to a finicky need of analysis. But often that analysis leads him to extraordinary discoveries. Then I read him with rapture. I even like the fact that the point of his scalpel attacks everything that offers itself to his mind, to his memory; to everything and to anything whatever. If there is waste here, it's just too bad! What matters is not so much the result of the analysis as the method. Often one follows attentively, not so much the matter on which he is operating, as the minute work of the instrument and the slow patience of his operation. But it constantly appears to me that if the true work of art cannot do without that preliminary operation, it really begins only with that accomplished. The work of art presupposes it, to be sure, but rises up only after that original operation has ended. The architecture in Proust is very beautiful; but it often happens, since he removes none of the scaffolding, that the latter assumes more importance than the monument itself, in which one's glance, constantly distracted by the detail, does not succeed in grasping the whole. Proust knew this, and this is what made him, in his letters and in his conversation, insist so much on the general composition of his work: he was well aware that it would not be obvious.

7 October

I always have to make an effort to get back to this notebook after I have forsaken it for some time. Since the 22nd of September we have lived through days of anguish³⁸ and "people" might be surprised not to find any echo of them here. But whoever concluded from my silence that I was indifferent to "public affairs" would be greatly mistaken. Merely the reflections I felt able to make hardly seemed to me in their place in this notebook; and if I ceased to write anything in it during all that time, this is because they filled my whole mind. Even though the events of history seem to me to escape at one and the same time both the will and the foresight of men, it seemed to me that reason (if not justice and right) was winning a victory over force; but I am not so convinced of this that I was not considerably shaken in my optimism by the admirable letter Jef Last wrote me. He is willing to see in the Munich conversations nothing but a shameful defeat, which can only

³⁷ *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (*Within a Budding Grove* in the Scott-Moncrieff translation), which first appeared in 1918 and won the Goncourt Prize, is the second part of Marcel Proust's great work, *Remembrance of Things Past*.

³⁸ The Munich crisis.

result in a new strengthening of Hitler and new claims; for us, nothing but new withdrawals and with dishonor. Would Germany have yielded to a firmer attitude, or at least to a less tardy firmness? Would a war have ensured the triumph of justice? or merely that of brute force?

8 October

What is the good of my repeating what is read in all the papers? My very uncertain voice can only be lost by joining in this concert. If it seems to me indecent to speak of anything else, it is better to keep silent. And yet the domain in which my mind recovers its value is not subject to invasion; I do not even have to try to shelter it. I do not have to take refuge in it; I live and breathe in it quite naturally. In that other domain where events would lead me, I cannot advance without groping like a blind man, yielding to the impulses of my heart rather than to the prompting of my reason. "The author of this report [on the Constitution] takes part in the present disputes only because he bewails them," says Montesquieu. It is of no avail to bewail. Let us go beyond.

I have gone back to these "hitherto unpublished" writings of Montesquieu with very great interest. He is a master among writers; I mean there is advantage in going to school to him, on condition of not staying in that school.

Reread also, last night before going to sleep, a number of *Maximes* by La Rochefoucauld. How can Schiffrin declare that most of them are insignificant? Quite on the contrary, I find but very few of them that leave the reader's mind at rest. Almost every one of them at one and the same time strikes home and acts as a slingshot to shoot the mind much farther than he accompanies you. One has only to go on without him; there lies the exquisite charm of this little book; and when I read for instance: "A man's merit has its season just like fruits," or "Weak people cannot be sincere," I have material to meditate for a long time.

Anniversary, today, of my marriage.³⁹ A day that I made a great point of spending with her, occasionally rushing back from a great distance. During these recent days of anguish I got to the point of ceasing to be sad that she is no longer here; she could not have endured all this. . . .

I am becoming gradually accustomed to the idea of having to live without her; but, without her, I am no longer interested in my life.

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<sup>39</sup> André Gide and Emmanuel Rondeaux were married on 8 October 1895.

16 October

At last I have been able to accomplish certain urgent tasks. I count among them the preface for the Pléiade edition of Shakespeare, unable to consider as real work that imposed chore . . . with which, all together, I am rather satisfied; but it contributed to distracting me from that to which I ought to devote all my efforts now. I am eager to do so. I still have ahead of me, before being able to devote myself to real work, correcting the proofs of *Antony and Cleopatra* and those of the *Journal* for the Pléiade edition. Perhaps I shall also write a continuation to my *Voyage en littérature anglaise*,<sup>40</sup> if I feel in form, for the review named *Verve*.<sup>41</sup>

This notebook, once more, has helped me to recover myself; now that I feel decidedly better, I should like nevertheless to continue keeping it up in order to note down certain reflections that could not find a place elsewhere and that I should not like to lose.

18 October

I am decidedly becoming resigned to feeling well. In addition to the condition in which one happens to be, there is a certain assent one gives to it which immediately ensures that condition and intensifies it. Thinking oneself well and feeling well play into the hands of health. For several days now I have been delighting in again feeling full of courage.

25 October

Yesterday at the Valérys'; exquisite and charming luncheon. I feel much more at ease with Paul since I have learned to limit the havoc wrought by his conversation. His extraordinary intelligence gives him, more than anyone else, a right to scorn. I know, better than in the past, how to get around his crushing superiority. Or, more exactly, I pay less attention to some of his annihilating statements and the fact that he recognizes no value in what is not quoted on his market. Moreover, there are many of his scorings that I share; but if I had to limit my approbations to his, I should feel too impoverished.

I accompany him to the radio council and sit beside him, around the green table. The name of the *Iliad* having been pronounced, Paul leans toward me and in a low voice:

"Do you know anything more boring than the *Iliad*?"

Dominating a sudden protest, I find it more . . . friendly to reply:

"Yes, the *Chanson de Roland*," which makes him agree at once.

Valéry's system involves a sort of austerity (and this is what makes

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<sup>40</sup> His essay "Travels in English Literature" appeared in the issue of *Verve* for Spring 1938.

<sup>41</sup> A pun is lost here, since *en verve* means to be "in form."

him so admirable in my eyes) and renunciation of which I do not feel at all capable.

I cannot involve the whole world in my grief. Everything goes on *as if nothing had happened* — and I too, as if nothing in my life had been changed. This is partly because everything she represented for me subsists untouched by her death. She was a direction of my heart; and already during her lifetime her voice, at times, seemed to me to come from a great distance.

21 November

I have taken leave. However stout I may still feel, I already look at everything from a distance; each awakening (especially after a siesta) brings me back with greater difficulty from a little farther away, and I make a greater effort to free myself always less successfully from a sleep in which I enjoy ever more delights. I think of the time when I used to spring from bed, ready armed. . . . Today at my very rising I am seized again by anguish upon contemplating the heavy cloud that spreads frightfully over Europe, over the entire universe. An anguish that my optimism is not sufficiently egotistical to overcome. Everywhere I see but a promise of death for everything that is still dear to me and for which we live. The threat seems to me so urgent that one would have to be blind not to see it and to continue hoping.

3 December

Hoping for what? Oh, merely that the spirit should win out. I am well aware (at least, I tell myself) that it always ends up by winning out. But while brute force exalts it by trying to dominate it, falsehood and compromise, by influencing it, do it much greater harm. The feeling of truth is being lost . . . or is it merely that I am becoming ever more sensitive to the distortions that the compromises of opportunism impose upon it?

To what a degree our foreign policy lacks straightforwardness and honesty! To what a degree any policy . . . I withdraw in bewilderment. Among all these bankruptcies that we have impotently witnessed, these profound discomfitures, of the League of Nations, of the League of Rights of Man, of the Russian Revolution, of Communism, has the Church at least been faithful and solid? Not always, alas, for recently we have again seen her come to terms. It could almost be said that it is thanks to Hitler that she is now rising up again; it seems as if she has finally become conscious of her role and of her sovereign mission. The danger, the attacks at least, have made her catch hold of herself, and many of the complaints that angered me against her have disappeared. Yesterday already, I am well aware, there held firm a

small number of Christians who deserved no blame; but their virtue was isolated and their voice could not make itself heard; that voice was stifled by the majority of the clergy, by the Church herself, concerned with her temporal interests and dealing with Mammon, as if ignorant of her strength and that it lay in her purity. I believe that the strangling of *Sept* would not be repeated today.<sup>42</sup> It is to the Church herself (at least I want to hope so) that today appear hateful those who make themselves a niche within religion with comfortable assurance, congratulating themselves on being looked after. She offered us and held out as examples conformists, when we needed saints.

The break-down of Communism restores to Christianity its revolutionary implication. Catholicism betrays as soon as it becomes conservative. Conservative of what, O Lord Christ? of titles, of fortunes, of privileges. *Tradition* has nothing to do with that. It is the spirit that is important to hand on, not the "letter that kills." That some Catholics felt this, I have never doubted. But it seems to me, today, that the Church even understands it; that she is beginning to understand it. Some (of whom Péguy to begin with, then Maritain, Marcel, Mauriac, Berdayev, Bergamin) have contributed greatly to this.

4 December

For lack of a productive work, which the broken-up life of Paris does not permit, I am wearing out my impatience by going over the proofs of my *Journal* for the Pléiade collection.

In spots I should like to add notes. Thus I read under date of 22 August 1930: "That self-indulgence to which love invites us, drawing from us not the best but what is most likely to please the other; you do not so much raise him as he debases you. . . ."

I maintain that reflection which, in the great majority of cases,

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<sup>42</sup> *Sept* (*Seven*) was a liberal Catholic weekly dealing with art, literature, politics, and current events, which ran from February 1934 until late August 1937. Edited by the Dominican Fathers of Juvisy, it included also contributions from such as Claudel, Mauriac, Bernanos, Gilson, and Marcel. Defending an essentially Christian doctrine whether it coincided with the positions of the political Right or those of the Left, *Sept* refused, for instance, to support the Front Populaire of 1936, yet it called Marcel Cachin a "loyal militant" and interviewed Léon Blum in January 1937. Such sincere impartiality brought attacks on the paper by more conservative Catholic groups, like the "Fédération Nationale Catholique," which led, four months later, to the newspaper's giving up an unequal struggle with the conclusion that "if it is impossible to serve Christ without encountering such hostility, it is better to disappear." *Sept* was therefore "strangled" by an opposition within Catholicism. Apparently Gide feels that fifteen months later, after the Munich Pact, there was either greater liberalism or greater solidarity among Catholics.



alas, seems to me fair. But I protest that I was not thinking of myself when writing it; it was but the best of me that I could offer to Em., and if at times I felt quite hampered by my love, that illusion came from the fact that the least good occupied a great deal of place in me.

23 December

No, no . . . it is with her that I had begun the game. Since she has withdrawn from it, I am no longer capable; I have lost interest in the great game of life and long to withdraw in turn.

In that October issue of the *N.R.F.*, in the midst of one of the most successful portraits by Suarès, I bump into this stupefying sentence: "Gabriele d'Annunzio is the greatest writer of Italy for at least the last three hundred years." And what of Leopardi? My astonishment was communicated to Suarès; and in the January issue, of which I have just received the last proofs, he makes up for it as best he can; as he had made up, in the past, for Dostoyevsky. He was "holding him in reserve," it seems. And this time: "What do you say of Leopardi?" "I am not saying anything about him: I am keeping him." For Suarès never admits that he has made a mistake; that is utterly incompatible with his ideas of "greatness," of *his* greatness.

Rather than confess that he had forgotten Leopardi, or that he didn't know him, he prefers to explain that, for him, Leopardi remains outside of Italian literature since it never knew how to take death or suffering seriously . . . so that, in order to save his stake, he now sacrifices Dante to his vanity.

What bothers me in Suarès is not at all the error in judgment, the failure to appreciate or the forgetting, to which we are all subject, involving on his part return, rectification, and retraction — as it happened for him in regard to Goethe, to Nietzsche, to Dostoyevsky, to Leopardi, and as it will soon happen, I hope, in regard to Chopin. What bothers me is the need of hiding that initial stumble and, by advantageously camouflaging the past, passing off the clever recovery of a supple mind for a congenital infallibility. What pettiness I see in that constant regard for his figure, in those affectations, that manner of dressing, that fear of being caught in undress, in a natural state! . . . What is the use? In the past I somewhat frequented Suarès. He has a charming nature and I have never found him greater than when he was least pre-occupied to seem so.

But he will take what I am saying as an insult, as a black and sly perfidy. It is not so much that he is susceptible, touchy; but he strives for an isolation that helps him to think himself incomparable. Being great does not suffice him; he likes himself only when superior.

And yet how well he spoke of Stendhal, in Milan, on the steps of

the Scala, dapper and trim, but always shedding some of his trimness, and all the more charming as a result!

*25 December*

I enjoy all the more chatting with Roger Martin du Gard as I enjoy less and less chatting with others. Each new conversation with him is added to the vast ensemble of a conversation begun long ago, interrupted, resumed, and, after all, always the same, just as my perpetual mute dialogue with Em. was always the same. And, just as with Em., Roger and I are constantly of the same opinion. Conversation does not oppose us; it teaches, warns, and enlightens us. It is, for me at least, extraordinarily enriching and profitable, and (perhaps I should say: above all) I enjoy it.

7 January

**D**o you think of making the most of (but have you merely noticed?) the repeated weak beats of the third, at the height of the accompaniment of the Nocturne in D flat (op. 27)? Have you noticed that they fall *contratempo* in exactly the same way as the double beats of the dominant in the slow part (in major), so extraordinarily *nocturnal* likewise, and so ecstatically beautiful, of the Scherzo in B minor?<sup>1</sup> Make it be like that drop of crystal which the tree-frog (or the toad perhaps) drops into the heart of the purest summer nights. Did Chopin think of it himself? . . . In any case, Paderewski did when he played the piece. On that crystalline note, at once detached from all the rest and melting into it, the whole landscape was suspended.

And, in both pieces similarly, as if lifted by ecstasy, it rises eventually (in the Nocturne a half-key and in the Scherzo a whole key), to fall back soon after, swooning with an excess of joy.

I had got to the point of playing that Nocturne very well; one of those that are most susceptible to misinterpretation. Anyway, it is not one of those I prefer. . . . When I think of the farewell I said to music,

*My heart almost bursts*<sup>2</sup>

and it does not seem to me that death can take anything from me, now, that has meant more to me.

8 January

Most of those musical poems of Chopin (I am thinking, just now, of the nocturnes) involve not so much difficulties of execution (I mean: of the kind the virtuoso readily overcomes) as others, of a quite different and superior nature, which it sometimes seems the virtuosos have not even glimpsed, for they override them and consider themselves satisfied if they execute the piece with that sovereign and imperturbable agility which they all have and which leaves us dazzled and insensitive. As for the secret of this poem, as for the mystery, the problem of art that presides over the composition and the very genesis of the piece, it seems that they have not glimpsed it; in any case, they in no way make us glimpse it.

I believe that the initial mistake comes from the fact that they (the virtuosos) strive above all to bring out Chopin's romanticism, whereas

<sup>1</sup> Both works are by Chopin.

<sup>2</sup> The line *A peu que le cœur ne me fende*, which Gide quotes here, appears early in François Villon's *Testament*, where the poet is lamenting his lost youth.

what seems to me most admirable in him is the reduction to classicism of the undeniable romantic contribution. That contribution, then that masterful subservience, is, I believe, nowhere more noteworthy than in the great Nocturne in C minor (op. 48). Nothing simpler than the composition, the proposition, of that admirable piece; but the pianist must understand them himself, and his playing must bring them out and, in a way, *explain* them. However surprising may appear the sudden gusts of wind in the second part of the piece, in major, at first so calm, so ample and solemn, astonishment must quickly yield to understanding, to acceptance of the triple rhythm of the bass, whose precipitated beats, in the repetition in minor, must be given with complete regularity,<sup>3</sup> *reconquered*, a triumph of the spiritual element over the elements originally unleashed. All is lost (that is to say that one ceases to understand anything) if the romanticism wins out. And above all: no *brio*! But what the virtuoso most often gives us is: a voice lost in the storm. Chopin did not want that.

What a joy, at that so charming lunch at the Paul Valéry's, to find Nadia Boulanger so completely in agreement with me in regard to the playing of the preludes and to what I had written on this (very insufficiently, alas!) in my *Notes sur Chopin*.<sup>4</sup> I should have liked to talk more with her.

*Marseille, 26 January*

Before leaving Paris, I was able to finish going over the proofs of my *Journal*. Upon rereading it, it seems to me that the systematic suppression (at least until my loss) of all the passages relative to Em. have, so to speak, *blinded* it. The few allusions to the secret drama of my life become incomprehensible through the absence of what would throw light on them; incomprehensible or inadmissible, the image of this mutilated me that I give there, which presents, in the ardent place of the heart, but a hole.

Obsessed by the thought of Spain's atrocious agony.

For a long time I have not traveled alone. I needed a younger companion, a pacer; I used to espouse his joy. Will this solitude that I am imposing on myself today urge me toward work? or rather toward de-

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<sup>3</sup> Despite the groups of four of the upper, several times; rhythms that must remain utterly independent of one another and not get in each other's way. It is essential that the declamation of the beginning, resumed in the final part through the storm, should not let itself be in any way modified by the contrasting scansion of the triplets of the bass. [A.]

<sup>4</sup> His "Notes on Chopin" appeared in the *Revue musicale* for December 1931.

spair? . . . I no longer have that intrepid curiosity which used to launch me into adventure, nor that desire and need of scaling or of rounding mountains and capes to see what is hidden on the other side. I have seen the sinister reverse of too many things. . . .

I am taking with me but few books:

*Joseph in Egypt* by Thomas Mann;

*Dichtung und Wahrheit*;

*Les Chroniqueurs du moyen âge* in the Pléiade collection;

*Les Pages choisies* of Claude Bernard;

a La Fontaine, and

*The Birth of Philosophy* by Nietzsche<sup>5</sup> in the recently published translation by Geneviève Bianquis — which I was reading yesterday in the train and have just finished in Marseille. I copy from it: "The greatest loss to touch humanity is the miscarriage of superior types." In a manner of speaking, for the saddest thing, it so happens, is that humanity is not *touched* by it.

Probably I shall go and meet Robert Levesque in Greece during the Easter vacation. Nothing recalls me to Paris before May. Here I am free, as I have never been; frightfully free, shall I still be able to "try to live"? . . .<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The titles of Mann's novel and Nietzsche's work are given in French, whereas Goethe's *Truth and Poetry* is in German. *The Medieval Chroniclers* in the Pléiade edition was edited by Albert Pauphilet and, like the *Selections* from Claude Bernard, had recently appeared.

<sup>6</sup> The last words are from a line in the final stanza of Paul Valéry's "*Le Cimetière marin*" ("The Cemetery by the Sea"), a poem opposing contemplation and action:

*Le vent se lève! . . . il faut tenter de vivre!*

(*The wind is rising! . . . one must try to live!*)

# Glossary of Persons

## MENTIONED IN VOLUME III OF THE JOURNALS

N.B. Not all the names listed in the Index are to be found in this Glossary. Servants, tradesmen, chance acquaintances, and others sufficiently identified in the text—together with the most famous in all domains—have been omitted here. Other names have simply resisted research.

Originally intended to identify the specifically French names that are presumably known to the author's compatriots, the Glossary has grown in the making to include all the persons about whom English-speaking readers might have questions.

André Gide and a few of his friends have been most helpful in supplying information.

Certain names included in the Glossaries of Volume I and Volume II are reproduced here because they are mentioned again in this volume.

J. O'B.

ACHARD, MARCEL (1899– ), French dramatist of fantasy and gay burlesque best known for his *Jean de la lune* (1929).

ADAMOVITCH, GEORGES (1894– ), Russian minor poet and literary critic who fled Russia in 1919 and became literary critic of an anti-Bolshevik daily in Paris. Since 1945 he has collaborated on a pro-Soviet Russian-language weekly in Paris, *Nouvelles russes*.

ALAIN (pseud. of Émile Chartier, 1868– ), French essayist and philosopher whose influence for realism and liberal independence spread to a whole generation through his teaching and his superior journalism.

ALAIN-FOURNIER (1886–1914), French poetic novelist of charming fancy, killed at the front soon after his first work, *Le Grand Meaulnes*, had established his genius.

ALIBERT, FRANÇOIS-PAUL (1873– ), French poet of Virgilian temper, strongly influenced by Mallarmé.

ALLÉGRET, ÉLIE, Protestant minister, tutor of André Gide and best man at his wedding. Founded the French mission at Talagouga in the Gaboon and later became director of the Center of French Protestant Missions. Of his five children, André Gide adopted the third, Marc.

ALLÉGRET, JEAN, eldest son of Élie Allégret; died of tuberculosis at Arcachon.

ALLÉGRET, MARC, third son of Élie Allégret; adopted by André Gide, whom he accompanied on trip to the Congo (1925–6). Excellent scenario-writer, author of *Lac aux dames*.

- ANDRÉÆ, Dr., Swiss doctor whom André Gide first consulted in Geneva in 1894 and whom he considers responsible for having cured him of a lung infection.
- ARAGON, LOUIS (1897- ), French poet, novelist, and journalist who abandoned surrealism in favor of militant Communism, became editor of the Communist daily *Ce Soir* before the war, and during the German occupation was one of the most articulate poets.
- ARLAND, MARCEL (1899- ), French novelist and essayist of the post-1918 unrest, best known for his reviews in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and for his Goncourt Prize novel, *L'Ordre*.
- AUDOUX, MARGUERITE (1865-1937), French realistic novelist who related her working-class life most vividly in *Marie-Claire* (1910). She belongs to the tradition of Lucien Jean, C.-L. Philippe, and Émile Guillaumin.
- AURIC, GEORGES (1899- ), French composer of the group known as "Les Six," who has written songs, orchestral and piano music, and ballets.
- BALZAC, JEAN-LOUIS GUEZ DE (1597-1654), French writer, member of the original French Academy, who preferred living in the country and is hence known chiefly for his stylistically beautiful letters to the great of the period.
- BANCROFT, GEORGE (1882- ), American actor of the New York stage, in silent pictures, and in such sound films as *Thunderbolt*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, etc.
- BARBEY D'AUREVILLY, JULES (1808-89), French poet, novelist, and critic of original and colorful personality and Catholic inspiration.
- BARING, MAURICE (1874- ), English novelist, dramatist, poet, and essayist.
- BARRÈS, MAURICE (1862-1923), French novelist who early won a place of distinction through his youthful "cult of the ego" and then evolved into a traditionalist and advocated "the cult of the earth and the dead"; his novels of Alsace-Lorraine preached a return to regionalism and expressed his ardent nationalism.
- BARTHOU, LOUIS (1862-1934), French statesman and writer, several times Minister of the Third Republic and twice Premier, in 1913 and 1930.
- BARYE, ANTOINE LOUIS (1796-1875), French sculptor who specialized in representing animals.
- BASSIANO, PRINCESSE DE (1882- ), née Marguerite Chapin, of New York, wife of Roffredo Caetani, first Prince of Bassiano;

patroness of art and literature, who subsidized, among other works, the quarterly review *Commerce*.

BATAILLE, HENRY (1872-1922), French dramatist of popular comedies of the psychology of love, such as *Maman Colibri* and *La Marche nuptiale*.

BEAUMARCHAIS, PIERRE AUGUSTIN CARON DE (1732-99), French dramatist at the court of Louis XV, author of *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*.

BECQUE, HENRY (1837-99), French realistic and satirical dramatist of *Les Corbeaux* and *La Parisienne*, models of the naturalistic theater.

BEDEL, MAURICE (1884- ), French novelist appreciated for his irony; his first work, *Jerome*, won the Goncourt Prize in 1927.

BELGION, MONTGOMERY (1892- ), Paris-born English journalist and essayist.

BELLINI, VINCENZO (1802-35), Italian composer of operas.

BENDA, JULIEN (1867- ), French philosopher and essayist, who has consistently defended intellectualism against Bergson and Sorel. His best-known work is *La Trahison des clercs* (1927).

BÉRANGER, PIERRE JEAN DE (1780-1857), French writer of popular songs.

BERDYAYEV, NICOLAI (1874-1948), Russian theologian, philosopher, and critic whose analyses of the philosophy of religion and history have exerted great influence in Europe. Exiled in 1922, he lived thereafter in Paris as director of the Academy of the Philosophy of Religion.

BERGAMIN, JOSÉ (1894- ), Spanish essayist influenced by Unamuno and by popular themes, who has defended intellectual Catholicism in his books and his periodical, *Cruz y raya*. An ardent supporter of the Loyalist cause during the civil war, he has since lived in Mexico.

BERGSON, HENRI (1859-1941), French philosopher of "creative evolution," who exalted the faculty of intuition over the pure intellect.

BERL, EMMANUEL (1892- ), French essayist.

BERNARD, CLAUDE (1813-78), French physiologist known as the founder of experimental medicine.

BERNARD, TRISTAN (1866-1947), French comic dramatist, known especially for *L'Anglais tel qu'on le parle*, *Le Petit Café*, *Triple-patte*.

BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE (1737-1814), French disciple of Rousseau and pre-romantic writer, whose sentimental novel *Paul et Virginie* (1787) sounded a new note in literature.



- BERNSTEIN, HENRY (1876– ), French dramatist of great force and wide popularity (*Le Secret, La Jalousie, Judith*).
- BERTAUX, FÉLIX, French professor of German, long at the Lycée Buffon; author of a French-German and German-French dictionary and of many class texts.
- BERTHELOT, PHILIPPE (1866–1934), French diplomat who after numerous successful missions became director of political affairs (1919) and general secretary (1920) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- BERTHELOT, RENÉ (1872– ), French historian of science and philosophy.
- BIANQUIS, GENEVIÈVE, French professor of German at the University of Dijon; author of studies on Goethe, Nietzsche, and Austrian poetry, and translator of Nietzsche, Thomas Mann, etc.; daughter of a Protestant minister of Rouen.
- BISET, KAREL-EMMANUEL (1633–91), Flemish painter of portraits, *genre*, and historical scenes.
- BLACQUE-BELAIR, French Deputy much interested in Algeria and Morocco; married the daughter of Cipa Godebski.
- BLANCHE, JACQUES-ÉMILE (1861–1942), French painter, known especially for his portraits, who also wrote his interesting recollections.
- BLEI, FRANZ (1871– ), Austrian writer who, besides other translations from English and French, translated Gide's *Bethsabé*, *Prométhée*, and *Roi Candaule* into German; founder of the review *Hyperion*.
- BLOCH, JEAN-RICHARD (1884–1947), French novelist and essayist of vigorous independent thought, long an editor of the monthly *Europe*.
- BOEGNER, MARC (1881– ), French Protestant minister, president of the Protestant Federation of France; his lenten sermons preached in Passy and broadcast have given him a widespread influence.
- BOILEAU, NICOLAS (1636–1711), French poet of the classic age, best known for his *Art of Poetry* and his *Satires*, which established him as the critical arbiter of the reign of Louis XIV.
- BONN, MORITZ JULIUS (1873– ), German professor of economics in Berlin, perhaps best known for *The Crisis of Capitalism in America* (entitled *Prosperity* in the German edition).
- BONNEFON, PAUL (1861–1922), French literary historian.
- BONNET, GEORGES (1889– ), French political figure, Deputy and several times Minister; specialist in economic affairs.
- BOSSUET, JACQUES BÉNIGNE (1627–1704), French bishop and famous preacher at the court of Louis XIV.

- BOULANGER, NADIA (1887- ), French pianist, composer, and orchestra conductor.
- BOULENGER, JACQUES (1879- ), French literary historian and critic.
- BOURDET, ÉDOUARD (1887-1945), French dramatist of satiric intent, best known for *The Captive* and *The Sex Fable*.
- BOURGET, PAUL (1852-1935), French novelist, dramatist, and essayist, who with Anatole France and Maurice Barrès dominated the literary scene before the first World War. His most characteristic novels are the psychological study *Le Disciple* (1889) and the sociological thesis *L'Étape* (1902).
- BOYLESVE, RENÉ (1867-1926), one of the masters of the French psychological novel (*La Becquée*, *L'Enfant à la balustrade*).
- BRÉA, LUDOVIC (1493-1516), French painter of religious subjects.
- BRÉAL, AUGUSTE, son of the eminent French philologist Michel Bréal; painter who studied under Gustave Moreau, and author of a penetrating study of Velázquez.
- BREITBACH, JOSEF (1903- ), anti-Nazi German novelist who now lives in Paris; author of *Rot Gegenrot*, etc.
- BRIEUX, EUGÈNE (1858-1932), French dramatist of such social thesis-plays as *Blanchette* and *Damaged Goods*.
- BRISSON, PIERRE (1896- ), French journalist, at present editor of the Paris *Figaro*, who is known for his drama criticism.
- BROWN, CHARLES ARMITAGE (1786-1842), English writer, friend of Keats, and author of a *Life of John Keats*.
- BRUNSCHVIG, LÉON (1869-1944), French philosopher known for his studies of Spinoza and Pascal as well as for his analyses of the philosophy of the sciences.
- BUFFON, GEORGES LOUIS LECLERC, COMTE DE (1707-88), French naturalist.
- BÜLOW, HANS GUIDO VON (1830-94), German pianist, conductor, and writer on music, who was a great friend and interpreter of Wagner.
- BUSONI, FERRUCCIO (1866-1924), Italian-German pianist and composer, known especially for his arrangements of Bach.
- BUSSY, DOROTHY, English translator of André Gide (*The Immoralist*, *Strait is the Gate*, *The Counterfeiters*, etc.), sister of Lytton Strachey and wife of the painter Simon Bussy.
- BUTLER, SAMUEL (1835-1902), English novelist of *The Way of All Flesh* and vigorous satirist of *Erewhon*, etc.
- CACHIN, MARCEL (1869- ), French leader of the Communist Party.

- CAMOËNS, LUIZ VAZ DE (1524?-79?), Portuguese poet of the epic *Lusiad*, celebrating the adventures of Vasco da Gama.
- CARPEAUX, JEAN-BAPTISTE (1827-75), French sculptor.
- CASE, ROBERT HOPE (1857-1945), English editor of Shakespeare, Marlowe, etc., and professor of English literature at the University of Liverpool.
- CASSOU, JEAN (1897- ), Spanish-born French poet, essayist, art critic, and director of the Paris Museum of Modern Art.
- CAZAMIAN, LOUIS (1877- ), French historian of English literature and professor at the Sorbonne.
- CHADOURNE, MARC (1895- ), French novelist, best known for *Vasco*.
- CHANVIN, CHARLES, French poet who gave up literature for the magistrature; friend of C.-L. Philippe.
- CHARDONNE, JACQUES (pseud. of Jacques Boutelleau, 1884- ), French novelist and essayist, appreciated for his delicate analyses of spiritual and emotional problems. Under his real name, he is a member of the Stock publishing firm.
- CHATEAUBRIAND, FRANÇOIS-RENÉ DE (1768-1848), French poet, novelist, essayist, and political figure who ushered in the romantic movement and left examples of a noble style for future generations.
- CHAUVEAU, DR. LÉOPOLD, French surgeon, sculptor, and novelist.
- CHEKHOV, ANTON (1860-1904), Russian *conteur* and dramatist of moods and inner action expressed in suggestive understatement.
- CHÉNIER, ANDRÉ (1762-94), French poet, whose work, published after his early execution by the Revolutionary Tribunal, seemed to the romantics a powerful romantic outburst, but was in reality soberly classical.
- CHEVALIER, AUGUSTE (1873- ), French naturalist, professor at the National Museum of Natural History.
- CLAIR, RENÉ (pseud. of René Chomette, 1898- ), French creator of such outstanding films as *Sous les toits de Paris* (his first talkie, 1930), *Le Million*, and *Le Silence est d'or*; he not only directs the filming, but also writes his own scripts.
- CLAUDEL, PAUL (1868- ), French poet and diplomat (Ambassador to Tokyo and to Washington), whose odes and verse dramas (*L'Annonce faite à Marie*, *Le Soulier de satin*, etc.) struck a new note of genius. Elected to the Academy in 1946.
- CLODION (pseud. of Claude Michel, 1738-1814), French sculptor.
- COCTEAU, JEAN (1892- ), French poet, novelist, and dramatist long associated with all advanced artistic movements.
- COLETTE, SIDONIE GABRIELLE (1873- ), French novelist of

subjective and sensual inspiration, one of the great stylists of her time.

COLIN, SAUL (1900– ), Rumanian-born and French-educated theatrical and film producer, long associated with Pirandello, on whom he has written; at present teaching and producing in New York.

CONSTANT, BENJAMIN (1767–1830), French statesman and author of a powerful novel of psychological analysis, *Adolphe*.

COOLUS, ROMAIN (1868–?), French writer of light comedies, such as *Cœur à cœur* and *Pardon, madame*, and journalist.

COPEAU, AGNES, Danish-born wife of Jacques Copeau.

COPEAU, JACQUES (1879– ), French critic and theatrical producer, who, after founding the *Nouvelle Revue Française* with Gide and others in 1909, revolutionized the French theater in 1913 by creating the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, with its new style of simplicity and sincerity.

COPPET, CHRISTIANE DE, Mme Marcel de Coppet, the daughter of Roger Martin du Gard.

COPPET, MARCEL DE, French colonial official who served first as Governor, then as Governor-General in French Equatorial Africa. Gide and Marc Allégret went to meet him in the Chad when he had just been named Governor. He took as his second wife the daughter of his old friend Roger Martin du Gard.

COSTANTIN, JULIEN (1857–?), French botanist, professor at the Museum of Natural History, and author of many studies of plant structure.

COUCHOUD, PAUL LOUIS (1879– ), French Orientalist who conducted a campaign in the twenties to prove that Jesus never existed; he also wrote with Albert Houtin on the celibacy of the clergy.

COURBET, GUSTAVE (1819–77), French painter who founded and led the realistic school.

CRÉMIEUX, BENJAMIN (1888–1944), French literary critic, historian of Italian literature, and translator of Pirandello; died in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

CRÉPET, JACQUES (1874– ), French literary historian whose studies and editions of Baudelaire are indispensable to scholars.

CROISSET, FRANCIS DE (pseud. of Franz Wiener, 1877–1937), Belgian-born French playwright of light comedies, usually somewhat risqué. He collaborated with Robert de Flers and others.

CURTIUS, ERNST-ROBERT (1886– ), German philologist and critic who has taught French history and literature at Bonn, Marburg, and Heidelberg.

- DABIT, EUGÈNE (1898–1936), French novelist, the son of a laborer, who won early recognition with *Hôtel du Nord* (1929); he died during a trip to Russia with André Gide and others.
- DALADIER, ÉDOUARD (1884– ), French statesman, member of many cabinets, and three times Premier (1933, 1934, 1938–40); he signed the Munich Pact in September 1938.
- DANIEL-ROPS, HENRY (1901– ), French novelist and essayist of Catholic inspiration.
- D'ANNUNZIO, GABRIELE (1863–1938), Italy's greatest literary artist since the mid-nineteenth century, who in his poems (*Laudi*, etc.), his novels (*Il Fuoco*, *Il Piacere*), and plays (*La Città morta*, *La Gioconda*) broke with classicism and introduced the new inspiration of foreign writers such as Hugo, Baudelaire, Whitman, Bourget, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, etc. Eventually, abandoning æstheticism, sensualism, and his international reputation, he became the national prophet of Italian imperialism.
- DAUDET, LÉON (1867–1942), French novelist and polemicist, who entered politics as a disciple of Maurras and representative of the royalist party; son of Alphonse Daudet.
- DAVID, LOUIS (1748–1825), French painter of classical technique, who largely set the style during the Directory and the Empire.
- DAVIDSON, JO (1883– ), American sculptor known for his portrait busts.
- DEGAS, EDGAR (1834–1917), French painter, important member of the impressionist school.
- DELACROIX, EUGÈNE (1799–1863), French painter of the romantic school, known for his brilliant color.
- DELCOURT, MARIE, Belgian classical scholar distinguished for her *Life of Euripides*, studies of Æschylus, the legend of Œdipus, Pericles, Erasmus, etc.
- DENIS, MAURICE (1870–1943), French painter of the neo-impressionist school and illustrator, many of whose works are of religious subjects.
- DESBORDES-VALMORE, MARCELINE (1786–1859), French poet of the romantic movement, famous for her elegies.
- DESJARDINS, PAUL (1859–1940), French moralist whose *Devoir présent* (1892) proclaimed the necessity for a moral awakening, which he worked to achieve by founding the same year L'Union pour l'Action Morale, later L'Union pour la Vérité, and finally the Entretiens de Pontigny, which embraced in a spirit of inquiry all the great literary, social, æsthetic, political, and religious problems of the age.
- DESMAREST, ALBERT, French painter, and first cousin of André Gide.

- DESTOUCHES (pseud. of Philippe Néricault, 1680-1754), French dramatist of comedies of manners.
- DIDEROT, DENIS (1713-84), French philosopher, critic, dramatist, etc., who edited the great *Encyclopédie*; a fecund writer and one of the great forces of the age of Enlightenment.
- DONNAY, MAURICE (1859-1945), French dramatist of love and psychological analysis, whose masterpiece, *Amants*, was first played in 1895.
- DOUGLAS, LORD ALFRED (1870-1945), English poet known chiefly for his relationship with Oscar Wilde, which led to the notorious trial in which Wilde sued Douglas's father, the Marquess of Queensberry.
- DREYFUS, ALFRED (1859-1935), French officer convicted of treason in 1894, whose case was eventually reopened after a vigorous campaign; in 1906 he was acquitted and released from prison.
- DRIEU LA ROCHELLE, PIERRE (1893-1944), French novelist, essayist, and dramatist whose work reflects the unrest of the twenties and a sincere form of fascism that made him an intellectual collaborationist during the German occupation.
- DROUIN, DOMINIQUE, son of Marcel Drouin; has spent much time in Ethiopia and has long been engaged in the film industry.
- DROUIN, MARCEL (1870-1946), French professor of philosophy in Alençon, Bordeaux, and Paris and, under the pseudonym of Michel Arnauld, essayist and critic. As a classmate of André Gide and Pierre Louÿs, he founded with them *Potache-Revue* and *La Conquête* (1891); in 1909, after a brilliant record at the École Normale Supérieure and sojourns in Germany, was instrumental in founding the *Nouvelle Revue Française* with his brother-in-law, André Gide.
- DU BOS, CHARLES (1882-1939), French literary critic of great taste and penetration, who devoted much of his interest to foreign literatures (notably English); he wrote a book on André Gide at about the same time that he was being reconverted to Catholicism.
- DUCOTE, ÉDOUARD (1870-1929), French poet, who became editor of *L'Ermitage* (1897-1906), grouping around him Gourmont, Ghéon, Claudel, Gide, Jammes, Copeau, etc.
- DUHAMEL, GEORGES (1884- ), French novelist (incidentally poet, essayist, dramatist), who won fame for his depiction of suffering humanity as seen by a military surgeon and proceeded to paint a picture of modern society (*Pasquier Chronicles*). After being a most effective editor of the *Mercure de France*, he was named perpetual secretary of the French Academy.
- DUJARDIN, ÉDOUARD (1861- ), French founder (1885) of the

- Revue wagnérienne*, editor (1886) of the *Revue indépendante*, one of the great disseminators of symbolist ideas, poet, dramatist, and student of early Christianity.
- DULLIN, CHARLES (1884- ), French actor and theatrical producer, who, after distinguishing himself as a member of Copeau's theater, founded his own artistic and highly successful Théâtre de l'Atelier in Paris.
- DUMAS, ALEXANDRE,  *fils* (1824-95), realistic and social French dramatist of *La Dame aux camélias* (*Camille*), *La Question d'argent*, etc.
- DURTAIN, LUC (1881- ), French novelist, essayist, and journalist of travel and exoticism, who is also a doctor.
- DUVERNOIS, HENRI (1875-1937), French novelist and dramatist of psychological finesse.
- ECKERMAN, JOHANN PETER (1792-1854), German amanuensis of Goethe and author of the famous *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann*.
- EHRENBURG, ILYA (1891- ), Russian journalist, poet, and novelist, ever a popular reporter for, and spokesman of, the U.S.S.R.
- ELLIS, HAVELOCK (1859-1939), English scientist known for his psychological approach to the problem of sex in his many authoritative studies.
- EM., *see* Gide, Mme André.
- EMERY, L., French elementary school-teacher and author of numerous class texts.
- ENGELS, FRIEDRICH (1820-95), German socialist who collaborated with Karl Marx on the *Communist Manifesto*.
- ESCHOLIER, RAYMOND (1882- ), French novelist and art critic.
- FABRE-LUCE, ALFRED (1899- ), French political writer.
- FAURÉ, GABRIEL-URBAIN (1845-1924), French composer, who wrote for the piano, chorus, chamber orchestra, and full orchestra as well as for the church and the stage. With Debussy he contributed to the rebirth of French music, and he renewed the classic tradition of Couperin and Rameau.
- FELS, MARTHE, COMTESSE DE (1898- ), Belgian writer on Vauban, Claude Monet, etc.
- FERNANDEZ, RAMON (1894-1944), French literary critic and novelist.
- FLINCK, GOVAERT (1615-60), Dutch painter of the school of Rembrandt.
- FOCH, FERDINAND (1851-1929), French marshal who was named

Commander in Chief of Allied Forces in 1918; member of the French Academy.

FONTAINE, ARTHUR (1860-1931), French sociologist and economist.

FOUQUET, JEAN (1415-80), French painter and miniaturist.

FRANCE, ANATOLE (1844-1924), French novelist and *conteur* (who began his career as poet and literary critic), famous for his limpid style, delicate irony, and skepticism (*Penguin Island*, *The Revolt of the Angels*, etc.).

FRANCK, HENRI (1888-1912), French poet and intellectual leader, who left a long poem, some scattered essays, and a stimulating correspondence with his friends. Studied at the École Normale Supérieure (1906-9), then contributed to the *Phalange* and the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.

FRANK, BRUNO (1886-1945), German novelist, dramatist, and poet, who left Germany in 1933. He is known for rather sensational romanticizing of the past in fiction.

FRAZER, SIR JAMES GEORGE (1854-1941), English anthropologist, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, known especially for *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915).

FREINET, C., French school-teacher at Saint-Paul (Alpes-Maritimes), who developed a new system of education involving the children in printing and illustrating their own writings.

FUMET, STANISLAS, French Catholic critic who has written on Baudelaire, Ernest Hello, Léon Bloy, etc.; publisher and editor of many literary reviews.

FUSTEL DE COULANGES, NUMA-DENIS (1830-89), French historian of the Merovingian and Carolingian epochs, who drew everything from the rigorous study of ancient texts.

GABORIAU, ÉMILE (1835-73), French writer of detective stories, creator of M. Lecoq and Père Tabaret.

GALLIMARD, GASTON (1881- ), French publisher, who became administrator of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* when founded in 1908-9 and later of the publishing house of Gallimard-NRF; also acted as business manager of Copeau's Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier.

GALLIMARD, RAYMOND, brother of Gaston Gallimard and his associate in the firm of Gallimard-NRF.

GAUTIER, THÉOPHILE (1811-72), French poet and novelist, who, heading the school of art for art's sake, acts as a pivot between romanticism and naturalism.

GERIN, LOUIS, Belgian coal-miner who made it possible for André Gide to go down into a mine.



- GESLIN, DR., French doctor on board a French Line ship; a lover of literature, he helped Gide with his remarks on the translation of *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- GHEON, HENRI (1875-1944), French novelist, dramatist, and critic, who began writing tragedies of the people (*Le Pain*, *L'Eau de vie*) and, after his conversion to Catholicism in 1917, revived the miracle play (*Le Pauvre sous l'escalier*). Closely associated with the early *Nouvelle Revue Française* and with the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier.
- GIDE, MME ANDRÉ (1867-1938), née Madeleine Emmanuèle Rondeaux.
- GIDE, CATHERINE (1923- ), daughter of André Gide.
- GIDE, CHARLES (1847-1932), younger brother of André Gide's father; famous professor of economics in Paris, who wrote more than a score of studies on political economy.
- GIDE, PAUL, son of the economist Charles Gide and first cousin of André Gide.
- GILBERT, VALENTINE, née Rondeaux, sister of Mme André Gide and wife of Marcel Gilbert.
- GILLET, FATHER MARTIN STANISLAS (1875- ), French head of the Dominican Order, author of many books on philosophy, conduct, and culture.
- GIONO, JEAN (1895- ), French novelist of the pure peasant life of the foothills of the Alps, saturated with poetry and a Tolstoyian philosophy: *Hill of Destiny*, *Harvest*, *Joy of Man's Desiring*, etc.
- GIRAUDOUX, JEAN (1882-1944), French novelist and dramatist, possessed of an original and beautiful style, who revived precision in literature.
- GLADKOV, FEODOR VASILIEVICH (1883- ), Russian novelist and dramatist strongly influenced by Gorky and Dostoyevsky, who has written works of socialist realism in *Cement*, *Energy*, and *The New Land*.
- GLAESER, ERNST (1902- ), German novelist of *Jahrgang 1902*, translated as *The Last Civilian*.
- GOGOL, NICOLAI VASILIEVICH (1809-52), Russian novelist of satirical works, such as *Dead Souls*.
- GONCHAROV, IVAN (1812-91), Russian novelist best known for his picture of the Russian gentry before the Revolution of 1917 in the novel *Oblomov*.
- GOURMONT, REMY DE (1858-1915), fecund French literary critic and novelist, one of the founders of the *Mercure de France* (1890), for which he wrote assiduously for the next twenty-five years, apologist and spokesman for the symbolist movement.

- GRANADOS, ENRIQUE (1867-1916), Spanish composer of piano pieces and of the opera *Goyescas*, made from some of them.
- GRASSET, BERNARD (1881- ), French publisher and journalist who founded a successful publishing house under his own name.
- GREEN, JULIEN (1900- ), French novelist of American parentage and French education (*The Closed Garden*, *Avarice House*, etc.).
- GRÈVE, FÉLIX-PAUL (1879- ), German translator of *The Arabian Nights* and of several works by André Gide (*Paludes*, *Saül*, *La Porte étroite*).
- GRÉVY, JULES (1807-91), French lawyer and President of the Republic from 1879 to 1887.
- GRIERSON, SIR HERBERT JOHN (1866- ), Scottish historian of English literature and one time Rector of Edinburgh University.
- GROETHUYSEN, BERNARD (1880-1946), German-born and naturalized French philosopher, critic, and historian of ideas. Of Dutch and Russian parentage, he had the European spirit. A close associate of many French writers and artists, he was an ardent Communist.
- GUÉHENNO, JEAN (1890- ), French essayist, born in the working class and rising through the best schools to a position of eminence in education. A disciple of Michelet and Rolland, he has long been a socialist spokesman.
- GUILLAIN, ALIX, French translator of Georg Simmel and other German writers.
- GUILLAUMET, HENRI (1902-40), French commercial aviator.
- GUILLOUX, LOUIS (1899- ), French novelist, born of working-class parents and early a socialist. His chief work, *Le Sang noir* (*Bitter Victory*), in 1935 revealed a powerful, revolutionary writer.
- HALÉVY, LUDOVIC (1834-1908), French novelist (*The Abbé Constantin*) and dramatist, who collaborated with Henri Meilhac in the writing of light comedies and operettas.
- HAMMER-PURGSTALL, JOSEPH VON (1774-1856), German Orientalist and translator of the fourteenth-century Persian poet Hafiz.
- HARAU COURT, EDMOND (1856-1941), French poet, novelist, and dramatist, honorary president of the Société des Gens de Lettres and director of the Musée de Cluny.
- HARDEKOPF, FERDINAND, anti-Nazi German who lived for some time in Nice and then settled in Switzerland; translator from French into German (*Les Caves du Vatican*).
- HARTUNG, GUSTAVE (1895-1946?), German theater director in Darmstadt, Berlin, and, after Hitler, in Zurich and Berne; died in Heidelberg.

- HAUSER, HENRI (1866– ), French professor of economic history at the Sorbonne; author of many publications.
- HELLO, ERNEST (1828–85), French satirical and mystical writer whose principal work, *L'Homme*, appeared in 1872.
- HENRIOT, ÉMILE (1889– ), French poet, novelist, and journalist; member of the French Academy.
- HÉRAULT DE SÉCHELLES, MARIE-JEAN (1759–94), French legist and statesman, President of the Convention, who died on the scaffold among the followers of Danton.
- HERBART, ÉLISABETH, Mme Pierre Herbart, née Van Rysselberghe.
- HERBART, PIERRE (1903– ), French novelist and journalist, author of *Le Rôdeur*, *Contre-Ordre*, *Alcyon*, who accompanied André Gide on his trip to Russia in 1936.
- HEREDIA, JOSÉ-MARIA DE (1842–1905), French poet of the Parnassian movement, whose single volume of sonnets, *Les Trophées* (1893), won him election to the French Academy.
- HERMANT, ABEL (1862– ), French novelist and dramatist of manners, appreciated for his wit. Elected to the Academy in 1927, he was excluded from that assembly in 1945 as a propagandist for the Vichy regime.
- HERVÉ (pseud. of Florimond Rongé, 1825–92), French composer and orchestra leader known for his operettas, such as *Le Petit Faust*, *Fifi et Nini*, etc.
- HESSE, HERMANN (1877– ), German novelist and poet of mystical and psychological insight, whose *Demian* (1919) and *Death and the Lover* (1930) are characteristic of the work that won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946.
- HEURGON, JACQUES, French professor of Latin, formerly at the University of Algiers, now at the University of Lille; married Anne Desjardins, the daughter of Paul Desjardins.
- HOBBEEMA, MEINDERT (1638–1709), Dutch landscape painter, pupil of Ruysdael.
- HÖLDERLIN, JOHANN CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH (1770–1843), German lyric poet and novelist.
- HOOGH, PIETER DE (ca. 1629–ca. 77), Dutch painter of *genre* scenes.
- HOUTIN, ALBERT (1867–1926), French priest defrocked for his controversial opinions.
- HIRSCH, CHARLES-HENRY (1870– ), French novelist.
- HIRSCH, LOUIS-DANIEL (1892– ), commercial director of the publishing house Éditions Gallimard.
- HUGHES, RICHARD (1900– ), English novelist and dramatist.

HUYSMANS, J.-K. (1849–1907), Belgian-born French novelist, who in 1884 broke with naturalism and was one of the first to herald the symbolist movement (*A rebours*); his later conversion to Catholicism and the novels it inspired (*La Cathédrale*) kept him in the forefront of French letters.

HYTIER, JEAN (1899– ), French professor of French literature at the University of Algiers, Columbia University, etc.; penetrating critic of contemporary literature, widely known for his studies of aesthetics and for his *André Gide* (1938).

INDY, VINCENT D' (1851–1931), French composer, pupil of César Franck, and co-founder of the Schola Cantorum.

INGRES, JEAN-AUGUSTE DOMINIQUE (1780–1867), French painter appreciated for the perfection of his draftsmanship.

JACHIMECKI, ZDZISLAW (1882– ), Polish authority on Chopin, whose chief work was published in France in 1930.

JACOB, MAX (1876–1944), French poet and painter, who revitalized modern poetry with a new vision and elegance. A Jew converted to Catholicism, he died in a German concentration camp.

JALOUX, EDMOND (1878– ), French novelist of subdued atmosphere and literary critic of sound judgment, who entered the French Academy in 1936.

JAMMES, FRANCIS (1868–1938), French intimist poet, who sang of his native Pyrenees with a childlike sensuality and an increasingly orthodox Catholic faith.

JOUHANDEAU, MARCEL (1888– ), French novelist whose bitter probings into the recesses of the soul have won him a special place in modern literature.

JOUVET, LOUIS (1887– ), French actor and theatrical producer who distinguished himself in Copeau's theater and then founded his own very successful theater, where he has staged works by Giraudoux, Rostand, Achard, etc.

KAP HERR, BARONESS VON, lady of Berlin society who took a vivid interest in literature.

KESSLER, HARRY VON (1868–1937), German diplomat and essayist, Paris-born and educated in England before going to German universities; author of *Recollections of a European, Germany and Europe, Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, etc.

KNICKERBOCKER, HUBERT RENFRO (1898– ), American newspaper correspondent, appreciated for his reports from Russia and his studies of the Soviet Five-Year Plan.

- LA BRUYÈRE JEAN DE (1645-96), French moralist of the classic age, famous for his *Caractères*, modeled after the observations of Theophrastus.
- LACRETELLE, JACQUES DE (1888- ), French novelist and essayist whose penetrating psychological analyses (*Silbermann*, *La Bonifas*, etc.) brought election to the French Academy in 1938.
- LALOU, RENÉ (1889- ), French critic, best known for his *History of Contemporary French Literature*.
- LAMBERT, ANNE-THERÈSE DE COURCELLES, MARQUISE DE (1647-1733), witty and influential French lady of society, whose *Advice to her Daughter and Son* (1728) contains moral reflections similar to those of Vauvenargues or Chesterfield.
- LAMENNAIS, FÉLICITÉ ROBERT DE (1782-1854), French Catholic apologist and political liberal who fought Gallicanism.
- LANG, ANDRÉ (1893- ), French journalist, novelist, and critic.
- LANSON, GUSTAVE (1857-1934), French literary historian, who imposed scientific methods in literary history on the French university and is remembered for his *History of French Literature* and his bibliographical manual.
- LARBAUD, VALÉRY (1881- ), French poet, novelist, and essayist, especially appreciated for his penetrating *Journal d'A. O. Barnabooth* (1913), which introduced into literature a new cosmopolitanism, and for his sensitive translations of Samuel Butler, W. S. Landor, Walt Whitman, etc.
- LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, FRANÇOIS, DUC DE (1613-80), French writer of the most famous collection of *Maxims*.
- LASSEIRE, PIERRE (1867-1930), French literary critic of conservative tendency, who studied French romanticism and also contemporary writers.
- LAST, JEF (1898?- ), Dutch poet and novelist who has traveled in Spain and Morocco, and accompanied André Gide on his trip to Russia in 1936.
- LAURENS, PAUL-ALBERT (1870-?), son of Jean-Paul Laurens; French painter and professor at the École des Beaux-Arts; intimate friend of André Gide, whom he accompanied on his first trip to Africa (1893). His portrait of Gide is in the Luxembourg Museum, Paris.
- LAURENS, PIERRE, son of Jean-Paul Laurens, and a painter himself; professor at the École des Beaux-Arts; great friend of Charles Péguy, whose portrait he painted.
- LAVIGERIE, CHARLES CARDINAL (1825-92), French prelate with a profound interest in Islam, whose jurisdiction as Archbishop of Algiers included all of French Africa.

- LE BOULANGER, PAUL, French authority on the French Far Eastern colonies.
- LECLAINCHE, EMMANUEL (1861- ), French pathologist who advanced knowledge of contagious diseases and developed serums to combat them.
- LECONTE DE LISLE, CHARLES (1818-94), French poet of the Parnassian school, whose work is steeped in classical culture.
- LEFÈVRE, FRÉDÉRIC (1889- ), French journalist and literary critic who founded the weekly *Nouvelles littéraires* in 1922 and for years conducted interviews with the literary great, published as *Une Heure avec . . .*
- LE GRIX, FRANÇOIS, French literary critic and one of the editors of *La Revue hebdomadaire*.
- LEHMANN, ROSAMOND (1903- ), English novelist of *Dusty Answer*, etc.
- LEMAÎTRE, JULES (1853-1914), French literary critic and exponent of the impressionist method in criticism.
- LESUR, French owner of a well-known restaurant on the corner of the rue de Beaune and the Quai Voltaire.
- LEVESQUE, ROBERT, French professor in Rome and Athens, who frequently accompanied André Gide on trips in Italy, Greece, and Egypt; author of studies and translations of contemporary Greek literature.
- LÉVY-BRUHL, LUCIEN (1857-1939), French anthropologist, historian, and philosopher, best known for his studies of primitive man.
- LHOTE, ANDRÉ (1885- ), French painter, who for many years wrote the art criticism in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.
- LIGNE, CHARLES-JOSEPH, PRINCE DE (1735-1814), Belgian-born general in the service of Austria, appreciated for his witty *Memoirs*.
- LIME, MAURICE, French workman who wrote one book, *Pays conquis*, published in 1935.
- LISZT, FRANZ (1811-86), Hungarian pianist and composer.
- LITTRE, ÉMILE (1801-81), French positivist philosopher, whose dictionary of the French language is still a standard work.
- LOMBROSO, CESARE (1836-1909), Italian criminologist, who held that the criminal type is distinguished by physiological and psychological characteristics.
- LORRAIN, JEAN (1855-1906), French novelist of manners.
- LOTI, PIERRE (pseud. of Julien Viaud, 1850-1923), French novelist of the sea and of far places, admired for *Pêcheur d'Islande* and *Aziyadé*.

LOUÏS, PIERRE (1870–1925), French poet and novelist of *Chansons de Bilitis* (1894), *Aphrodite* (1896), and *Les Aventures du roi Pausole* (1900).

MADÉLIN, LOUIS (1871– ), French historian of the Revolution and the nineteenth century; member of the French Academy.

MADRAZO, FREDERICO DE (?–1938), Spanish painter and musician who spent most of his life in Paris, where he committed suicide by gas.

MAISTRE, JOSEPH DE (1754–1821), French philosopher and essayist, who, as Ambassador of the King of Sardinia to the Russian court, wrote his *Considerations on France* and *St. Petersburg Evenings* to contradict the philosophy of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in favor of absolute monarchy and papal infallibility.

MALACKI, JAN, *see* Malaquais, Jean.

MALAUQUAIS, JEAN (pseud. of Jan Malacki, 1908– ), Polish-born French novelist who in 1939 won the Renaudot Prize for his first work, *Les Javanais (Men from Nowhere)*.

MALEBRANCHE, NICOLAS (1638–1715), French Cartesian philosopher, author of *The Search for Truth*, who stressed the dualism of mind and matter.

MALLARMÉ, STÉPHANE (1842–98), French poet, whose intellectual purity and hermetic style influenced a whole generation of writers despite the limitation of his first *Complete Poems* to forty copies. His weekly receptions in his Paris apartment (1886–98) gathered the artistic élite of the Continent in fascinating conversation.

MALRAUX, ANDRÉ (1901– ), French novelist of *Man's Fate*, *Man's Hope*, etc., and organizer of a bombing squadron for the Spanish Republican army in 1936.

MALRAUX, CLARA, the first Mme André Malraux, née Goldschmidt, herself a literary critic.

MALRAUX, FLO, daughter of André Malraux by his first wife.

MALRAUX, ROLAND (1912–44), brother of André Malraux. Briefly secretary to André Gide, he later worked on films in Russia (1936–7). He died in a German concentration camp at Neuengamme after playing an important part in the French underground.

MAN, HENRI DE (1885– ), Belgian socialist and leader of the Labor Party.

MANN, KLAUS (1908– ), German novelist, playwright, and essayist, the son of Thomas Mann. His study of *André Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought* was written directly in English.

MANN, THOMAS (1875– ), German novelist and essayist, appreciated particularly for *Buddenbrooks* and *The Magic Mountain*.

- MARCEL, GABRIEL (1887- ), French philosopher and dramatist of Catholic inspiration.
- MARDRUS, DR. J. C. (1868- ), French Orientalist and translator of *The Thousand and One Nights* in 16 volumes.
- MARITAIN, JACQUES (1882- ), French theologian and philosopher, inspired first by Bergson, then by Thomas Aquinas. Known primarily as a metaphysician, he has also contributed to æsthetics, ethics, and politics. French Ambassador to the Holy See (1946-8).
- MARIVAUX, PIERRE CARLET DE CHAMBLAIN DE (1688-1763), French dramatist and novelist of great sensibility and psychological penetration, whose name (*marivaudage*) stands for witty banter about love. His journals were inspired by Addison, and his novels in turn influenced Richardson.
- MARTIN-CHAUFFIER, LOUIS (1894- ), French novelist, essayist, and literary critic, who also edited the fifteen-volume edition of *The Complete Works* of André Gide.
- MARTIN DU GARD, HÉLÈNE, Mme Roger Martin du Gard.
- MARTIN DU GARD, MAURICE (1896- ), French journalist, critic, and long chief editor of the *Nouvelles littéraires*.
- MARTIN DU GARD, ROGER (1881- ), French novelist and dramatist whose vivid realistic novel in many volumes, *The World of the Thibaults*, won the Nobel Prize in 1937.
- MARTINET, ÉDOUARD, Swiss literary critic who wrote a study of André Gide.
- MASSIGNON, LOUIS (1883- ), French professor of Oriental history at the Collège de France.
- MASSIS, HENRI (1886- ), French literary critic and essayist, defender of the Latin inheritance in his *Defence of the West*, who severely criticized Renan, Gide, Duhamel, France, and Benda in the nationalist *Revue universelle*.
- MAUCLAIR, CAMILLE (pseud. of Camille Faust, 1872-1945), French poet, novelist, and critic, who revealed and defended much of the best in modern French art and literature.
- MAURIAC, FRANÇOIS (1885- ), French novelist, dramatist, and essayist, appreciated in English for *Thérèse*, *Vipers' Tangle*, etc. A Catholic writer of great vigor, he was elected to the French Academy in 1939.
- MAUROIS, ANDRÉ (pseud. of Émile Herzog, 1885- ), French novelist, biographer, and essayist, whose facile clarity made his lives of Shelley, Disraeli, and Byron world-famous and opened the French Academy to him in 1938.
- MAURRAS, CHARLES (1868- ), French poet, essayist, pamphlet-



- eer, and political leader of the Action Française movement; exponent of decentralization and a return to monarchy, who was tried in 1945 as the ideologist of the Vichy government and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- MAURY, LUCIEN (1872- ), French literary critic, translator from the Scandinavian languages, and co-editor, since 1934, of the *Revue bleue*.
- MAXENCE, JEAN (1906- ), French political writer and literary critic.
- MAYRISCH DE SAINT-HUBERT, MME ÉMILE (P-1947), wife of the director of the great Luxemburg metallurgical syndicate named Arbet. A woman of great culture in French, English, and German, she received poets, philosophers, painters, and sculptors in her château of Colpach in Luxemburg, which became a meeting-place of French and German cultures. She traveled in the Orient with the late director of the Musée Guimet and in the Near East with André Gide.
- MECKERT, JEAN, French novelist who reflects the point of view of the masses.
- MEILHAC, HENRI (1831-97), French dramatist who collaborated with Ludovic Halévy in light comedies and operatic librettos.
- MELVILLE, HERMAN (1819-91), American novelist of *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Moby Dick*.
- MENDÈS, CATULLE (1843-1909), prolific French poet and dramatist.
- MÉRIMÉE, PROSPER (1803-70), French novelist, dramatist, and, chiefly, writer of short stories, such as *Carmen* and *Colomba*, famous for their objectivity and artistry.
- MEYER, ARTHUR (1844-1924), French journalist who founded *Le Gaulois* in 1865 and revived it in 1879; one of the wits and famous figures of the boulevards; Catholic and royalist, despite his Jewish birth, he was anti-Dreyfusard.
- MICHAUX, HENRI (1899- ), Belgian-born French poet and painter, appreciated for his strong personal fantasy and the exoticism resulting from his extensive travels.
- MICHELET, JULES (1798-1874), French historian, who joined poetic inspiration to scientific research and in his voluminous work consistently defended the lower classes.
- MICKIEWICZ, ADAM (1798-1855), Polish epic and lyric poet banished from his native land during most of his lifetime.
- MIRSKY, DMITRY SVYATOPOLK, PRINCE (1890- ), Russian historian and literary historian, best known for his work on Russian literature.
- MONNIER, ADRIENNE (1892- ), French poet, essayist, and pub-

lisher who founded in 1917 a bookshop and publishing house on the rue de l'Odéon which has been a meeting-place for the greatest writers of the period.

MONNIER, HENRI (1805-77), French writer and caricaturist of satiric intent, creator of "Joseph Prudhomme."

MONTESQUIEU, CHARLES LOUIS DE SECONDAT DE (1689-1755), French political philosopher, best known for his *Lettres persanes* and his analysis of political constitutions, *De l'esprit des lois*.

MONTFORT, EUGÈNE (1877-1936), French novelist, editor of *Les Marges* (which he wrote entirely himself from 1903 to 1908), and author of a tableau of modern French literature.

MONTHERLANT, HENRY DE (1886- ), French novelist, essayist, and dramatist who first epitomized the restless and cynical youth of the twenties and then produced a series of cruel novels of great power and technical skill.

MONZIE, ANATOLE DE (1876-1947), French lawyer and political figure; several times Minister of the Third Republic, he was considered to have influenced Daladier's policy that led to the Munich Pact.

MORAND, PAUL (1888- ), French novelist and journalist of travel; his short stories *Open All Night* and *Closed All Night* established his reputation in the twenties as a clever juggler of images characteristic of the restless age.

MÜNCHHAUSEN, BARON (1720-97), German cavalry officer, the tales of whose impossible adventures, as told by Rudolph Erich Raspe, are classics of invention.

MURAZ, DR. PAUL JEAN MARIE, French Doctor of Pharmacy associated with the Pasteur Institute.

MURGER, HENRI (1822-61), French novelist, poet, and essayist, most appreciated for his sketches of bohemian life in Paris.

MUSSET, ALFRED DE (1810-57), French romantic poet and dramatist of lyric quality, grace, and exquisite humor.

NAVILLE, ARNOLD (1879- ), Swiss financier, early interested in the work of André Gide, on which he published bibliographical notes in 1930; long a close friend of the author.

NAVILLE, CLAUDE (1908-35), Swiss executive of a publishing house and author of a study of *André Gide and Communism*; son of Arnold Naville.

NAVILLE, PIERRE (1904- ), Swiss publicist and writer on social, political, and philosophical questions; son of Arnold Naville.

NEEL, PHILIPPE, translator into French of Henry James and Conrad.

NIZAN, PAUL (1905-40), French novelist, best known for *La Con-*

- spiration*, translator of Theodore Dreiser and Louis Fischer, and Communist, who left the party after the Berlin-Moscow accord in 1939; he was killed at the front.
- NOAILLES, ANNA, COMTESSE DE (1876-1933), French poet and novelist of delicate talent and vibrant sensitivity.
- NOAILLES, CHARLES, VICOMTE DE (1891- ), French noble who, with his wife, Marie-Laure, entertained writers and musicians at his villa at Hyères; brother of Henry de Noailles, Duc de Mouchy.
- NOULET, MME ÉMILIE, French scholar noted for her penetrating studies of Mallarmé and Valéry.
- OBEY, ANDRÉ (1892- ), French actor, dramatist, and briefly administrator of the Comédie-Française.
- OFFENBACH, JACQUES LÉVY (1819-80), French composer of light operas, such as *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Bluebeard*, *La Vie parisienne*.
- PAGANINI, NICOLÒ (1784-1840), Italian violinist.
- PAGNOL, MARCEL (1895- ), French dramatist and cinema director, who was elected to the French Academy in 1946 for his stage successes, *Marius*, *Topaze*, and *Fanny*.
- PALLENBERG, MAX (1877-1945?), German comic actor known for his opposition to Hitler.
- PASCAL, BLAISE (1623-62), French Catholic polemicist and philosopher, known for the vigor, conciseness, and beauty of his *Pensées*, composed as an apology of Christianity.
- PASCAL, PIERRE (1890- ), French professor of Russian at the École des Langues Orientales in Paris; author of an important study of Avvakum, a *History of Russia*, etc.
- PAULHAN, JEAN (1884- ), French æsthetician, essayist, and inspirer of modern literature; from 1925 until 1940 he was chief editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.
- PAULUS (pseud. of Jean-Paul Habans, 1845-1908), French popular singer who enjoyed a great vogue in 1887-9 and served the cause of General Boulanger with such songs as "*Le Père la Victoire*."
- PAWLOWSKI, GASTON DE, French literary critic and for many years chief editor of the weekly *Comœdia*.
- PÉGUY, CHARLES (1873-1914), French poet and essayist, who exerted a very great influence through such works as his *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Notre Patrie*, and *L'Argent*, as well as through the review he founded and edited, *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (1902-14).
- PEIGNOT, MME CHARLES, wife of the well-known French type-designer and type-founder.

- PELL, ELSIE E., American professor of French at Hunter College, New York, who wrote a thesis at Grenoble on Gide's religious evolution.
- PERSE, ST.-J. (pseud. of Alexis Saint-Léger Léger, 1887- ), French poet of the vigorous, imagistic strophes of *Eloges* (1910) and *Anabase* (1924) and general secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1933-40).
- PÉTAIN, HENRI-PHILIPPE (1856- ), French marshal who commanded at Verdun in 1916 and in 1940 became Chief of State under the German occupation. Condemned in 1945 to life imprisonment for high treason.
- PHILIPPE, CHARLES-LOUIS (1874-1909), French realistic novelist of the simple life, who left several masterpieces.
- PIERRE-QUINT, LÉON (1895- ), French literary critic, best known for his biographical and critical studies on Proust and Gide.
- PIGALLE, JEAN-BAPTISTE (1714-85), French sculptor.
- PITOËFF, GEORGES (1886-1939), Russian-born French actor and theatrical director, who introduced Pirandello, Lenormand, Andreyev, Shaw, etc., to the French stage.
- PLATEN, AUGUST VON (1796-1835), German poet and dramatist of liberal policies and conservative style.
- POINCARÉ, JULES HENRI (1854-1912), French mathematician and physicist who enlarged the field of mathematical physics.
- POINCARÉ, RAYMOND (1860-1934), French lawyer and political figure, President of the Republic from 1913 to 1920 and several times Premier.
- PORCHAT, JEAN-JACQUES (1800-64), Swiss poet and translator into French of the complete works of Goethe.
- PORCHÉ, FRANÇOIS (1877-1944), French dramatist and literary critic.
- POULAILLE, HENRY (1896- ), French novelist, film scenarist, and critic known as a champion of literature with proletarian subjects.
- POURTALES, GUY DE (1881- ), Swiss biographer and music critic of French Protestant origin, known for his *Life of Liszt*, *Richard Wagner*, etc.
- POUSSIN, NICOLAS (1594-1665), French master of classical painting.
- PRENANT, MARCEL (1893- ), French zoologist, author of studies on race-theories.
- PRÉVOST, JEAN (1901-44), French novelist and essayist of brilliant but hasty works reflecting the unrest and insatiable curiosity of his generation.
- PRINZHORN, DR. HANS (1886-1933), German psychiatrist who translated Gide's *Nourritures terrestres* into German.
- PROUST, MARCEL (1871-1922), French novelist whose one great

work in sixteen volumes is a masterpiece of psychological penetration and of poetic re-creation of the past through the involuntary memory.

PRUNIÈRES, HENRY (1886- ), French music critic and historian, who founded *La Revue musicale* in 1919 and edited the complete works of Lulli (1930).

PSICHARI, ERNEST (1883-1914), French soldier and writer of Catholic inspiration; grandson of Renan.

PUGET, PIERRE (1622-94), French sculptor, painter, and architect, appreciated especially for his statues of classical subjects in the Louvre.

RADIGUET, RAYMOND (1903-23), French poet and novelist of striking, precocious works of classical inspiration.

RAIMU, JULES (1883-1946), French actor on stage and screen.

RAMUZ, CHARLES-FERDINAND (1878-1947), Swiss novelist of nature and the poetry of peasant life in *Derborence*, *La Joie dans le ciel*, etc.

RÉAUMUR, RENÉ-ANTOINE DE (1683-1757), French physicist and naturalist.

REINHARDT, MAX (1873-1943), Austrian actor and theatrical producer, long director of the Deutsches Theater, whose original settings created the mood for each play.

RÉMUSAT, CHARLES DE (1797-1875), French writer and political figure, often Minister both before and after the Second Empire.

• RENAN, ERNEST (1823-92), French philologist, historian of religions, and philosopher, most famous for his unorthodox *Life of Jesus*.

RENOIR, JEAN (1894- ), French creator of films such as *La Grande Illusion* and *La Bête humaine*; son of the painter Auguste Renoir, and brother of Pierre.

RENOIR, PIERRE, French actor appreciated chiefly for his sober performances with Louis Jouvet's company.

RHODES, S. A. (1895- ), American professor of French literature at the College of the City of New York, known for his studies of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, etc.

RICARDO, DAVID (1772-1823), English economist of far-reaching influence who developed new theories of rent and wages and the labor theory of value.

RILKE, RAINER MARIA (1875-1926), German poet, born in Prague, who lived long in Paris in close association with the sculptor Rodin. His elegies and other poems are thoughtful works of great artistry.

RIMBAUD, ARTHUR (1854-91), French poet of great originality,

whose two works revolutionized modern poetry. Abandoning literature entirely at the age of nineteen, he ended his life as an adventurer and business representative in Abyssinia.

RIVIERE, JACQUES (1886-1925), French critic, and editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* from 1919 to 1925 after having been identified with the review from 1909. His vivid correspondence with Alain-Fournier and with Claudel is famous.

ROCHE, DENIS (1868-?), French translator of Chekhov, Turgenyev, and Tolstoy between 1901 and 1935.

ROLLAND, ROMAIN (1866-1944), French novelist, dramatist, and biographer, best known for his *Jean-Christophe*, his lives of Tolstoy, Beethoven, etc., and his pacifism.

ROMAINS, JULES (pseud. of Louis Farigoule, 1885- ), French poet, novelist, dramatist, and essayist, who invented Unanimism, achieved great success on the stage with his farce *Knock*, and wrote a cyclic novel of 27 volumes entitled *Men of Good Will*. He was elected to the French Academy in 1946.

ROMIER, LUCIEN (1885- ), French political historian and essayist.

RONDEAUX, GEORGES, brother of Mme André Gide and long mayor of Cuverville.

RONSARD, PIERRE DE (1524-85), French poet of the Renaissance, who with Joachim du Bellay and others founded the group known as the Pléiade and revolutionized French poetry as much by his theories as by his beautiful odes and sonnets.

ROSTAND, EDMOND (1868-1918), French poetic dramatist, whose *Cyrano de Bergerac* renewed the romantic drama brilliantly at the end of the century.

ROSTAND, JEAN (1894- ), French biologist of many, often very popular, publications.

ROUART, EUGENE, son of a famous industrialist and collector of modern French paintings; he married one of the daughters of the painter Henri Lerolle. As a graduate of the School of Agriculture at Grignon, he directed various large agricultural enterprises, and, entering politics, was elected Senator from the Haute-Garonne. Great friend of writers and painters, he contributed to the early interest in Francis Jammes. He and Jammes joined Gide at Biskra in 1895 and Gide dedicated his *Paludes* to him. He himself wrote a novel, *La Villa sans maître*, which did not enjoy much success despite the interesting psychological problem it sets forth.

RUBINSTEIN, IDA, Russian-born dancer who danced with the Diagilev company and put on performances of her own in works by Valéry, d'Annunzio, Gide, etc.

RUDE, FRANÇOIS (1784-1855), French sculptor, best known for his relief of the *Marseillaise* on the Arc de Triomphe.

- RUSSELL, BERTRAND (1872- ), English philosopher, mathematician, and essayist.
- RUTHERFORD, MARK, *see* White, William Hale.
- RUYSDAEL, SALOMON VAN (*ca.* 1600-70), Dutch painter.
- RUYTERS, ANDRÉ (1876- ), Belgian writer and banker, who was one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. He went to Addis Ababa as a bank director, then managed the Far Eastern branches of the Banque d'Indochine. He has long lived in China.
- SACHS, MAURICE (1906-44<sup>p</sup>), French author of a study of André Gide and of a scurrilous book of memoirs. Having apparently collaborated with the German occupying forces, he is said to have died in Hamburg.
- SAILLET, MAURICE (1915- ), French literary critic of subtle mind and delicate sensitivity who often writes under the name of Justin Saget; associated with Adrienne Monnier in managing her bookshop on rue de l'Odéon.
- SAINTE-BEUVE, AUGUSTIN (1804-69), French critic belonging to the romantic school, whose *Monday Chats* and *Literary Portraits* have outlived his poems and single novel.
- SAINTE-SOLINE, CLAIRE, French novelist of *Une Journée* (1934) and *D'une haleine* (1935).
- SAINT EXUPÉRY, ANTOINE DE (1900-44), French novelist and aviator, whose *Night Flight* and *Wind, Sand and Stars* brought a new heroism into French fiction.
- SAINT JEAN, ROBERT DE, French writer and journalist who has specialized in the study of the United States, obtaining the Strassburger Prize in 1934; long associated with *La Revue hebdomadaire*, he is the author of a novel and of numerous critical articles.
- SAINT-JUST, LOUIS DE (1767-94), French revolutionary who was active in organizing the Terror; he was guillotined with Robespierre.
- SALES, ST. FRANÇOIS DE (1567-1622), French Bishop of Geneva and author of numerous works of devotion, the best of which is *Introduction to the Devout Life*.
- SALVEMINI, GAETANO (1873- ), Italian historian known also as an anti-Fascist patriot; his works include numerous studies of Italian history and one on the French Revolution.
- SARTIAUX, FÉLIX (1876- ), French archæologist interested in Asia Minor; also known for his studies of Kant and of the French priest Joseph Turmel.
- SASSOON, SIEGFRIED (1886- ), English poet known for his bitter poems resulting from the first World War and for his autobio-

graphical works, which began with *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928).

SAUCIER, ROLAND (1899– ), French director of the bookshop of the Librairie Gallimard, boulevard Raspail, since 1920.

SCHAEFFLE, ALBERT E. (1831–1903), German scholar, author of the popular *Quintessence of Socialism*.

SCHIFFRIN, JACQUES, Russian-born French publisher who created the well-known Éditions de la Pléiade, in which he brought out the first complete edition of André Gide's *Journal*; close friend of Gide, whom he accompanied to Russia in 1936; in America for the last several years, he is one of the officers of Pantheon Books.

SCHLUMBERGER, JEAN (1877– ), French novelist of psychological insight and one of the founders of the *N.R.F.*

SCHWOB, MARCEL (1867–1905), French prose-poet of the symbolist period, whose great erudition, visual imagination, and ironic, flexible style gave him a significant place in modern letters.

SCHWOB, RENÉ (1895– ), French literary critic who, converted to Catholicism, entered a religious order; nephew of Marcel Schwob.

SEIGNOBOS, CHARLES (1854–1941), French liberal historian of Europe and professor at the Sorbonne.

SERGE, VICTOR (pseud. of Victor Lvovich Kilbalchich, 1891–1947), Russian journalist, member of the first Communist International Congress in 1919, was exiled in 1933 as a Trotskyite; author of *Russia Twenty Years After*.

SÉVIGNÉ, MARIE DE RABUTIN-CHANTAL, MARQUISE DE (1626–96), French noblewoman famous for the vivid letters she wrote to her daughter.

SFORZA, CARLO, CONTE (1872– ), Italian statesman and writer, anti-Fascist patriot and worker for international understanding.

SIEBURG, FRIEDRICH (1893– ), German journalist who achieved renown for his widely translated essay *Gott in Frankreich (Who Are These French?)*.

SIEGFRIED, ANDRÉ (1875– ), French political economist and authority on England and America.

SIEYÈS, ABBÉ EMMANUEL JOSEPH (1748–1836), French political pamphleteer and revolutionary who helped Bonaparte overthrow the Directory in 1799, then served as one of the three Consuls and later as Senator.

SOUDAY, PAUL (1869–1929), French critic, who from 1912 until his death wrote the regular literary criticism in *Le Temps*.

SOUPAULT, PHILIPPE (1897– ), French poet, novelist, and essayist who abandoned Dadaism and surrealism in favor of adventure novels of a poetic nature, and political analysis.



- STEKEL, WILHELM (1868-1940), German psychologist known for his studies in the pathology of sex.
- STERNHEIM, KARL (1881-1943), German critic, dramatist, and novelist of expressionistic tendency, best known for the comedy *Die Hose* (1911).
- STERNHEIM, STOISY, wife of Karl Sternheim and translator of Gide's *Saül* into German.
- STOLS, A. A. M. (1900- ), Dutch lover of literature and fine printing who has long been known for the beautiful editions in Dutch, English, and French that he published in Maastricht.
- STRAVINSKY, IGOR (1882- ), Russian composer of great originality and variety.
- STROHL, JEAN (1886- ), Swiss biologist, dean of the Faculty of Sciences, University of Zurich, and author of studies in the history of the natural sciences and in teratology.
- SUARÈS, ANDRÉ (1868-1948), French poet and essayist of flamboyant nature and broad views, whose essays on Wagner, Dostoyevsky, and Pascal are penetrating and original.
- SYMONDS, JOHN ADDINGTON (1840-93), English literary historian and biographer, whose major work is *The Renaissance in Italy*.
- TAINE, HIPPOLYTE (1828-93), French historian, critic, and philosopher, most widely known for his *History of English Literature*.
- THÉRIVE, ANDRÉ (1891- ), French novelist, literary critic, and grammarian.
- THIBAUDET, ALBERT (1874-1936), French literary critic whose studies of Bergson, Mallarmé, Valéry, and Flaubert and regular articles in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* won him a place among the keenest and most stimulating French critics; for many years he professed at the University of Geneva.
- TOCQUEVILLE, ALEXIS DE (1805-59), French publicist and statesman, author of *Democracy in America*.
- TOMLINSON, HENRY MAJOR (1873- ), English journalist and novelist.
- TOURNIER, bookseller in Tunis and friend of André Gide
- TRAUBEL, HORACE (1858-1919), American friend and, with others, literary executor of Walt Whitman; in 1915 appeared his three-volume work *With Walt Whitman in Camden*.
- TREMBLEY, ABRAHAM (1710-84), Swiss naturalist.
- TREMBLEY, MAURICE, Swiss naturalist and grandson of the preceding.
- TURMEL, ABBÉ JOSEPH (1859-?), French priest who, under various pseudonyms, wrote numerous works of unorthodox exegesis.

- TZARA, TRISTAN (1896- ), Rumanian founder of the Dada movement in Geneva in 1916, who has continued to write poetry in French.
- UTRILLO, MAURICE (1883- ), French painter noted for his canvases of city and village streets.
- VAILLANT-COUTURIER, PAUL (1892-1937), French Deputy who joined the Communist Party and was instrumental in leading André Gide to Communism; his wife was one of the heroines of the French Resistance, deported to Auschwitz and Ravensbruck, who testified at the Nuremberg trials.
- VALÉRY, CLAUDE, elder son of Paul Valéry.
- VALÉRY, JEANNIE, Mme Paul Valéry, née Gobillard.
- VALÉRY, PAUL (1871-1945), French poet and essayist, who began his career when as a law student he met Pierre Louÿs and André Gide, then Mallarmé, whose chief disciple he became. After a brilliant start he abandoned literature for twenty years and was persuaded to return in 1917 by Gide. His mature career was crowned by his election to the French Academy in 1925.
- VALLETTE, ALFRED (1858-1935), French writer who was one of the founders and, until his death, the chief editor of the *Mercure de France*. He was largely instrumental in the growth of that important review from a 32-page brochure of symbolist literature to a powerful force in modern letters, with its own publishing house.
- VANDÉREM, FERNAND (1864-1939), French novelist, dramatist, and literary critic.
- VAN RYSELBERGHE, ÉLISABETH, daughter of Théo Van Rysselberghe and mother of Catherine Gide.
- VAN RYSELBERGHE, THÉO (1862-1926), Belgian painter of landscapes and portraits.
- VAN RYSELBERGHE, MME THÉO (1865- ), wife of the preceding and, under the pseudonym of M. Saint-Clair, author of a subtle novelette and of delicate literary portraits.
- VAUBAN, SÉBASTIEN LE PRESTRE, SEIGNEUR DE (1633-1707), French marshal and engineer under Louis XIV, reputed for successfully besieging so many towns and fortifying others.
- VAUTEL, CLÉMENT (1876- ), Belgian-born French novelist and journalist known for his love of common sense and scorn of snobbery expressed in *Mon curé chez les riches*, etc. He has also a reputation as a grammatical purist.
- VAUVENARGUES, LUC DE CLAPIERS, MARQUIS DE (1715-47), French moralist who left a collection of *Maxims* almost as celebrated as those of La Rochefoucauld.

- VERHAEREN, ÉMILE (1855–1916), Belgian poet of the cult of humanity and the tumultuous forces of modern life.
- VERLAINE, PAUL (1844–96), French symbolist poet, distinguished for the musical quality of his verse and his rather disreputable life.
- VIELÉ-GRIFFIN, FRANCIS (1864–1937), American-born French poet of nature, who, inspired by the Greek classics, the Scandinavians, and Walt Whitman, contributed a new breath to the symbolist movement.
- VIÉNOT, PIERRE (1897–1944), French statesman who, after working with Marshal Lyautey in Morocco, became one of the first members of the Free French government in London, where he died; son-in-law of Mme Mayrisch.
- VIGNY, ALFRED DE (1797–1863), French romantic poet of philosophic turn who, like Hugo, also wrote fiction and drama.
- VOGEL, LUCIEN ANTOINE (1886– ), French founder and editor-in-chief of various French fashion periodicals, art editor of the French edition of *Vogue* (1922–7), and publisher of such books as Gide's *Antoine et Cléopâtre*, with illustrations by Dréa. His eldest daughter, Marie-Claude, became Mme Paul Vaillant-Couturier, and his second daughter, Nadine, became Mme Marc Allégret.
- WALEY, ARTHUR, English Orientalist known chiefly for his many translations from the Chinese.
- WERFEL, FRANZ (1890–1945), Austrian novelist, dramatist, and poet, best known for such novels as *The Last Days of Musa Dagh* and *The Song of Bernadette*.
- WHITE, WILLIAM HALE (1831–1913), English author of a sincere self-analysis, who wrote under the pseudonym of Mark Rutherford.
- WIELAND, CHRISTOPH MARTIN (1733–1813), German poet and free-thinker who has been called "the German Voltaire"; translator of Shakespeare.
- WILDER, THORNTON (1897– ), American novelist and dramatist.
- WILLY (pseud. of Henry Gauthier-Villars, 1859–1931), French journalist and novelist; first husband of Colette (from 1893 to 1907), he was instrumental in discovering her talent.
- ZOLA, ÉMILE (1840–1902), French novelist of the naturalist school, best known for his vast series of novels, *Les Rougon-Macquart*.
- ZWEIG, STEFAN (1881–1942), Austrian biographer, novelist, dramatist, and poet of ardent international sympathies.

# THE WORKS OF ANDRÉ GIDE

## POETRY IN VERSE AND IN PROSE

|                                                                             |                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Les Cahiers d'André Walter</i><br>(Librairie de l'Art Indépendant, 1891) | The Notebooks of André Walter                                               |
| <i>Les Poésies d'André Walter</i><br>(ibid., 1892)                          | The Poems of André Walter                                                   |
| <i>Le Traité du Narcisse</i><br>(ibid., 1891)                               | The Treatise of the Narcissus                                               |
| <i>La Tentative amoureuse</i><br>(ibid., 1893)                              | The Attempt at Love                                                         |
| <i>Le Voyage d'Urien</i><br>(ibid., 1893)                                   | Urien's Travels                                                             |
| * <i>Les Nourritures terrestres</i><br>(Mercure de France, 1897)            | * <i>Fruits of the Earth</i><br>(London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1949)     |
| <i>El Hadj</i><br>(ibid., 1899)                                             | El Hadj                                                                     |
| <i>Amyntas</i><br>(ibid., 1906)                                             | Amyntas                                                                     |
| <i>Le Retour de l'enfant prodigue</i><br>(Vers et Prose, 1907)              | The Prodigal's Return                                                       |
| * <i>Les Nouvelles Nourritures</i><br>(Gallimard, 1935)                     | * <i>New Fruits of the Earth</i><br>(London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1949) |

## TALES

|                                                     |                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * <i>L'Immoraliste</i><br>(Mercure de France, 1902) | * <i>The Immoralist</i><br>(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930; London: Cassell & Co.)     |
| * <i>La Porte étroite</i><br>(ibid., 1909)          | * <i>Strait Is the Gate</i><br>(New York: ibid., 1924; London: Martin Secker & Warburg) |

N.B. Since 1935 the author and his French publisher have ceased classifying Gide's works in categories. The translator therefore assumes full responsibility for this pigeonholing.

\* The titles preceded by an asterisk have been published in English translation. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by Dorothy Bussy.

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * <i>Isabelle</i><br>(Gallimard, 1911)                                    | * <i>Isabelle</i><br>(New York: <i>ibid.</i> , 1931; London: Cassell & Co.; in <i>Two Symphonies</i> ) |
| * <i>La Symphonie pastorale</i><br>( <i>ibid.</i> , 1919)                 | * <i>The Pastoral Symphony</i><br>( <i>ibid.</i> )                                                     |
| * <i>L'École des femmes</i><br>( <i>ibid.</i> , 1929)                     | * <i>The School for Wives</i><br>(New York: <i>ibid.</i> , 1929; London: Cassell & Co.)                |
| <i>Robert</i><br>( <i>ibid.</i> , 1929)                                   | Robert                                                                                                 |
| <i>Geneviève</i><br>( <i>ibid.</i> , 1939)                                | Genevieve                                                                                              |
| * <i>Thésée</i><br>( <i>ibid.</i> , 1946; New York: Pantheon Books, 1946) | * <i>Theseus</i><br>(London: Horizon Publications, 1948; New York: New Directions)                     |

## SATIRICAL FARCES

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Paludes</i><br>(Librairie de l'Art Indépendant, 1895)        | Morasses                                                                                                                                        |
| * <i>Le Prométhée mal enchaîné</i><br>(Mercure de France, 1899) | * <i>Prometheus Ill-Bound</i><br>(London: Chatto & Windus, 1919; trans. by Lilian Roth-ermere)                                                  |
| * <i>Les Caves du Vatican</i><br>(Gallimard, 1914)              | * <i>The Vatican Swindle</i><br>(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925) or <i>Lafcadio's Adventures</i> ( <i>ibid.</i> , 1927; London: Cassell & Co.) |

## NOVEL

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|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * <i>Les Faux-Monnayeurs</i><br>(Gallimard, 1926) | * <i>The Counterfeiters</i><br>(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927) or <i>The Coiners</i> (London: Cassell & Co.) |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## CRITICISM

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Prétextes</i><br>(Mercure de France, 1903)                          | Pretexts                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Nouveaux Prétextes</i><br>(ibid., 1911)                             | Further Pretexts                                                                                                                                                    |
| * <i>Dostoïevsky</i><br>(Plon-Nourrit, 1923)                           | * <i>Dostoevsky</i><br>(London: J. M. Dent, 1925;<br>Martin Secker & Warburg,<br>1949; New York: Alfred A.<br>Knopf, 1926; New Direc-<br>tions, 1949; trans. anon.) |
| <i>Incidences</i><br>(Gallimard, 1924)                                 | Angles of Incidence                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs</i><br>(ibid., 1926)                    | The Counterfettlers' Day-Book or<br>Journal of The Coiners                                                                                                          |
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